Magsaysay: Erap tried to give amnesty to Abu

STORY ON PAGE A2

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

BALANCED NEWS, FEARLESS VIEWS

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Wahid offers Salamat asylum

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday offered a tiny island as a refuge for the leader of the Moro Islamic Liberation Front.

The President also said he was willing to grant asylum to Salamat Hashim, chair of the MILF, a group fighting for self-rule in Mindanao.

He also offered to mediate in the conflict

WAHID/ A20

Palace orders SSS to defer dues hike

By Clarissa S. Batino

MALACAÑANG yesterday ordered the Social Security System (SSS) to defer for two years a plan to raise the monthly contributions of the 23 million members of the pension fund.

SSS executive vice president Horace Templo said the plan to raise the dues from the current

PALACE/ A21

NBI chief: Suspects don't mention Ping

But Lacson not yet off the hook in Dacer murder case

By Juliet L. Javellana

IN A four-hour Senate hearing yesterday, Sen. Juan Flavier asked National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco to give a "categorical statement" regarding "certain allegations" that former Philippine National Police chief Panfilo Lacson had a hand in the Salvador Dacer double-murder case.

"I wish I could do that," Wycoco told the Senate human rights committee conducting the inquiry. "At this point we cannot clear anybody."

He added: "We are still continuing with our investigation. But may I say at this point, the name of General Lacson has not been mentioned by any of the witnesses or suspects."

Lacson, an opposition senatorial candidate, headed the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) when publicist "Bubby" Dacer and his driver Manuel Corbito were abducted and killed last Nov. 24.

Lacson, who sat through the hearing for two hours waiting for his turn to speak, confronted Wycoco for having "insinuated" in a press conference that Lacson might have been involved in the abduction and murders because of

NBI CHIEF/ A21

'Cops took my hubby against his will'

By Cathy C. Yamsuan, Christine Herrera and the PDI Visayas Bureau

THE WIFE of a police officer linked to the Dacer double murder case yesterday asked the Court of Appeals to compel the Philippine National Police top brass to produce him in court.

Araceli Langcauon claims that her husband, P/Insp. Roberto Langcauon, has been detained for no reason since Monday, and has filed a petition for habeas corpus to compel PNP Director General Leandro Mendoza to present him and show reason for his continued detention.

She disputed Mendoza's claim that Langcauon voluntarily turned himself in to the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detention Group.

Langcauon, his wife claimed, was picked up for "questioning" at their home in Camp Crame by members of the CIDG on April 16. He has not been released since.

Two days after he was picked up, Langcauon was included in a lineup of suspects in the Dacer case.

But PNP spokesperson Supt. Rodrigo de Gracia said Langcauon was not forcibly taken by agents but was only invited for question-

COPS/ A21

PRAYED over by kith and kin, including wife, Loi, sons Jinggoy and JV, son-in-law, Beaver Lopez and Sen. Miriam Santiago, ex-President Estrada hears Mass on his 64th birthday in Barangay San Juan, San Lorenzo Ruiz, Taytay, Rizal. EDWIN BACASMAS

Joy, sorrow on Erap's birthday

By Volt Contreras

JOSEPH Estrada fought back tears as he thanked a community of supporters who came out to greet their embattled "legal president" on his 64th birthday yesterday.

In his traditional visit to the San Juan Relocation Site in Taytay, Rizal, his housing project for poor families uprooted from his hometown of San Juan, the disgraced leader flashed the old magnetism. But the adulation from the loyal throng was mixed with pity.

"I feel both joy and sorrow today," Estrada said in Filipino in the village parish where he, members of his family and a circle of VIP friends heard Mass.

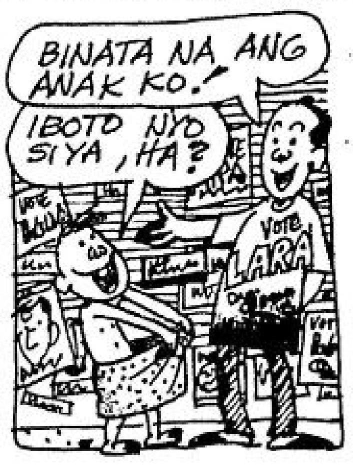
He said he was sad to see poverty still unabated, and happy because he continued to enjoy the trust of people who had supported him since his days as mayor of San Juan.

"I pray that people will really learn how to love and stop being greedy," Estrada said, faltering in his reading of a prepared speech.

Then he wiped his nose and his moistening eyes.

Inside and outside the church, about 4,000 people endured the midday heat just to catch a glimpse of the ex-president.

JOY/ A20


BINATA NA ANG ANAK KO.!
IBOTO NYO SIYA, HA?
VOTE LARA

It's 'tule' for politicos in Cagayan

By Estanislao Caldez
PDI N. Luzon Bureau

TUGUEGARAO CITY—Politicians in Cagayan have shifted their attention to children to get the votes of their parents.

Reports gathered by the Inquirer showed that

IT'S/ A21

Sandiganbayan chief scolds 'unprepared' gov't lawyers

By Martin P. Marfil and Michael Lim Ubac

GOVERNMENT prosecutors seeking to withdraw graft charges against Joseph Estrada got a scolding yesterday from Sandiganbayan Presiding Justice Francis Garchitorena for coming to court unprepared.

Garchitorena also questioned the wisdom of filing a single plunder case against Estrada, asking if it could be considered a single act if a government official took P20 million and, at the end of his term, another P30 million.

The question floored Special Prosecutors Leonardo Tamayo and Victorio Tabanguil, who struggled vainly to come up with an answer.

In an apparent bid to end the questioning, Tamayo warned the anti-graft court that asking for a definition of plunder could lead people to believe that the court was "lawyering" for the disgraced leader.

Garchitorena retorted that plunder was one of the reasons cited by the Office of the Ombudsman in the manifestation to withdraw the cases, and reminded the prosecutors that it would be the court, and not the public, that would decide whether the cases could be withdrawn.

SANDIGANBAYAN/ A20

REMEMBERING: The 1st anniversary of the crash of Air Philippines Flight 541 was marked by a call for its reinvestigation and by Holy Mass celebrated by Fr. Robert Reyes at the crash site in Barangay Camudmud, Island Garden City of Samal. There, a tree and stone shrine will rise in memory of the 131 victims. GENE BOYD LUMAWAG

Peace talks cheaper than waging war

By Carlito Pablo and Alcuin Papa

TALKING peace is cheaper than waging war, according to Silvestre Bello III, chair of the government panel negotiating with communist rebels.

Bello said that from 1992 to 1998, the government spent P13 million for foreign trips to meet representatives of the communist-led National Democratic Front (NDF).

"It's still a lot cheaper compared to the acquisition of one APC (armored personnel carrier), which costs $600,000 or P30 million," Bello said in an interview.

Talks between the government and the NDF resume in Oslo, Nor-

PEACE/ A20

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE JOAN BONDOC

President Macapagal is accorded a royal welcome at the Mindanao State University in Marawi on Thursday. She also visited Sultan Kudarat and Davao City.

IMBESTIGAHAN DIN ANG PROCLAMATION NA YAN!

Second FRONT PAGE

Magsaysay: Erap tried to give amnesty to Abu

BY CHRISTINE AVENDAÑO

DEPOSED President Joseph Estrada tried to give unconditional amnesty to the Abu Sayyaf through a proclamation he issued late last year, just as the troubles that would eventually topple his administration were beginning to unfold.

This was revealed yesterday by administration senatorial candidate Ramon Magsaysay Jr. who said Proclamation Order No. 405 granted "amnesty to rebel groups that committed non-political crimes, particularly kidnappings for ransom and massacres."

Estrada at the time had just declared an "all-out" war against the Abu Sayyaf and the bigger Moro Islamic Liberation Front, two groups fighting for Muslim independence in the southern Philippines.

The Abu Sayyaf had earlier in the year kidnapped dozens of foreign and Filipino hostages and demanded ransom for their release, among other conditions, acts that enraged Estrada and brought international embarrassment to the Philippines.

At one point in the crisis, Estrada had even vowed to finish off the Abu Sayyaf. "*Uubusin ko sila* (I will finish them off)," was how he had put it.

In a statement, Magsaysay pointed out that National Amnesty Commission chair Alfredo Tadiar had objected to the proclamation which was signed by Estrada on Oct.26 last year, because it did not specify that the amnesty did not cover non-political crimes such as kidnappings and massacres.

Members of Magsaysay's staff said the senator, who is running for reelection under the administration's People Power Coalition, shared Tadiar's objection.

They said Magsaysay and Tadiar were wary of Section 1 of the proclamation which stated that amnesty would be granted to all rebels who applied for it and who had committed crimes in pursuit of their political beliefs.

The same section said, however, the amnesty didn't cover rape, crimes against chastity and other crimes committed for personal ends.

Magsaysay said the order also stated there was a "need to give other rebel groups the widest possible opportunity" to avail of the amnesty.

Magsaysay's staffers said the proclamation order did not reach the Senate for its concurrence.

Magsaysay questioned whether the proclamation was issued by Estrada as part of a "compromise agreement" or "business transaction" that would "exonerate both parties (the government and the rebels) from serious crimes at the expense of national security."

Magsaysay pointed out the proclamation was issued at the time certain government officials were being accused of taking commissions from the ransom paid for the foreign hostages by the government of Libya.

"Was the proclamation part of a well-crafted plan to make the most of the kidnapping crisis while claiming the effectiveness of the government in solving the problem and freeing the hostages?" the senator asked.

Magsaysay urged Justice Secretary Hernando Perez to investigate the timing of the issuance of the proclamation and the payment of the ransom to the Abu Sayyaf by the Libyans.

At the time, too, it was pointed out, Estrada and his supporters were desperately seeking issues to divert the public's attention from the jueteng scandal that was just being unfolded before the nation by Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson.

Ex-hostage pleads for last Abu captive

STRYDOM

A SOUTH African couple who were among 21 persons held hostage by Muslim extremists last year appealed Wednesday to the Philippine military to ensure the safety of the last captive still in rebel hands as it tries to rescue him.

Monique and Callie Strydom said they have "serious doubts" such an operation would succeed and asked the Philippine government to give the "highest priority" to making sure Roland Ullah survives his year-old ordeal.

Ullah is the last of two hostages who had remained in Abu Sayyaf hands since their kidnapping spree began April of last year.

The other hostage, American Jeffrey Schilling, was rescued from his captors last week and has since joined his mother in Oakland, California.

Mrs. Carol Schilling yesterday thanked President Macapagal-Arroyo for her son's rescue, Malacañang said.

"I am deeply appreciative of the efforts made by your country to effect my son's safe release," the palace quoted Mrs. Schilling's letter to Macapagal.

Her son had been held for eight months by the Abu Sayyaf on the remote southern island of Jolo.

In a statement sent to the Associated Press in Manila, the Strydoms dismissed rumors Ullah may have joined his captors.

"We got to know him as a warm, caring and humorous person who would not do anyone harm," they said.

"Any rumors claiming he has joined the Abu Sayyaf are totally untrue and should not be used to justify actions that may cause something to happen to him," they said.

On Wednesday, 10 Abu Sayyaf fighters and two civilians were killed in a clash with government forces in Talipao town on Jolo.

The Strydoms were vacationing on the Malaysian island resort of Sipadan when they were seized by the Abu Sayyaf on April 23, 2000.

Seized along with them were three Germans, three French, two Finns, nine Malaysians, Ullah and another Filipino worker who were all taken to Jolo.

"It is impossible for someone to know what we went through, and Roland is still going through it in the hands of the Abu Sayyaf," the Strydoms said.

They said the chief Philippine negotiator at the time "failed miserably" to win the release of the hostages.

They appealed for an investigation of allegations that members of the negotiating team and the government received kickbacks from the ransom money paid for their freedom by the Libyan government.

AP and AFP reports

Hancock witness told to hide

PERTH, Australia—A witness at an inquest into the death of Australian mining tycoon Lang Hancock told the inquiry Thursday she had been advised to stay in the Philippines and not give evidence in the Western Australian Coroner's Court case.

Filipino Heidi Biddle, a former maid to Hancock's Philippines-born widow, now the remarried Rose Porteous, said a former investigator for Hancock's daughter, Gina Rinehart, called her in the Philippines.

"He told me: 'Don't come back, hide there. And don't give anyone your address, for your protection.'"

The witness identified the investigator as Colin Pace and said she had told him: "I am not afraid. I am coming back to tell the truth about what happened—and if they kill me, at least I have said it all."

Biddle said she had believed Pace was a police investigator liaising with Rinehart's lawyers.

But, she said, Pace appeared to have fallen out with Rinehart in the lead-up to the inquest and had phoned her while she was in the Philippines.

He told her to ignore a summons to attend the inquest, she said. Biddle said she did not know why Pace had warned her off returning, saying she was not scared of anyone—not even Rose Porteous who had threatened her. *AFP*

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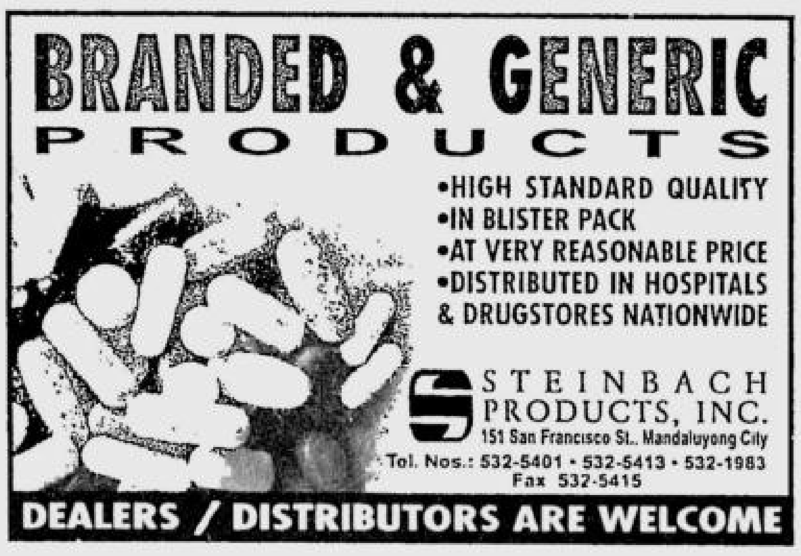
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Gov't to audit coco levy funds

BAGUIO CITY—The government will audit all the multimillion-peso coconut levy transactions made by appointees under the terms of former Presidents Fidel Ramos and Joseph Estrada, a Presidential Commission on Good Government official said here on Tuesday.

PCGG Commissioner Ruben Carranza said government lawyers need to recheck bank documents regarding the coconut levy funds which have either been classified or may have been buried in the archives of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas.

"I am only two weeks into this job. But I (realized) that there have been no comparisons done between (the evidence materials) and the original documents. I am (embarking on the heavy workload). I want to start litigating these cases," he told reporters. "I can't presume to resolve these cases. I just want them litigated during my term."

Carranza and coconut farmers were at the Supreme Court here Tuesday to hear Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo and lawyer Estelito Mendoza give their arguments on the coconut levy funds.

The high court heard the final arguments on the nature of the controversial multimillion-peso coconut levy funds that had implicated businessman Eduardo Cojuangco Jr.

A resolution will determine whether government can administer substantial portions of some 80 percent in equity of the sequestered United Coconut Planters Bank (UCPB), and the bank's 27 percent shares in San Miguel Corp., which Cojuangco now controls.

The Macapagal administration had questioned a Feb. 28 Sandiganbayan ruling which legitimized the voting powers of Cojuangco and the Philippine Coconut Producers Inc. over UCPB, Carranza said.

Mendoza argued before the high court that Cojuangco's controlling shares of stock at UCPB was privately financed and had not used any of the coconut levy funds.

The levy was imposed by the late strongman Ferdinand Marcos.

But Carranza said Mendoza, Cojuangco's lawyer, also claimed that PCGG appointees to the UCPB board had been derailing bank transactions, particularly during the Ramos administration.

Carranza said the Cojuangco camp has not responded to an offer for a joint audit to be undertaken by government and the UCPB controlling shareholders.

Efren Villaseñor, president of the Pambansang Koalisyon ng mga Sambayanang Magsasaka at Manggagawa sa Niyogan (Peksman), said the audit can help fortify the government's stake over UCPB.

Vincent Cabreza, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

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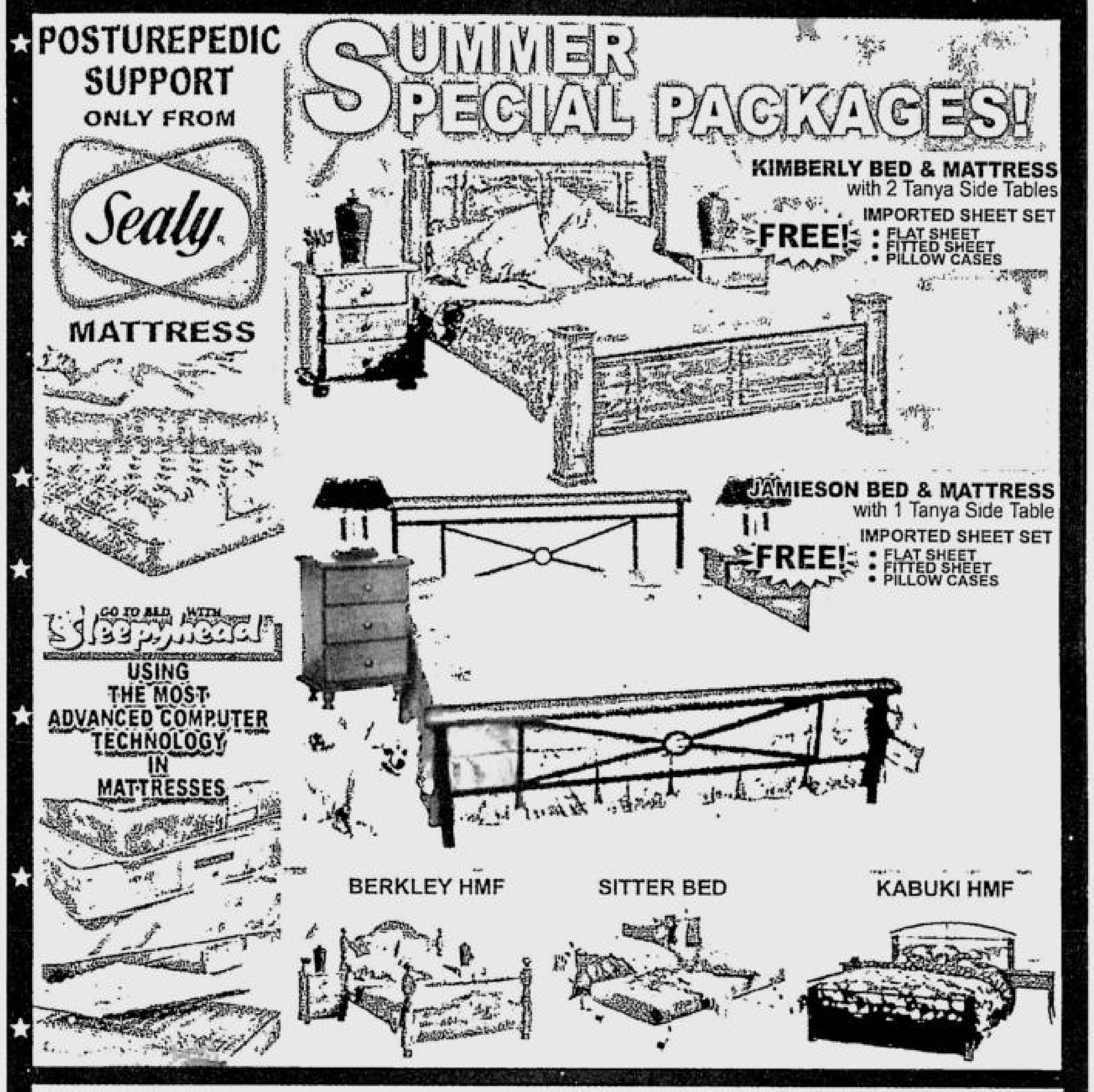

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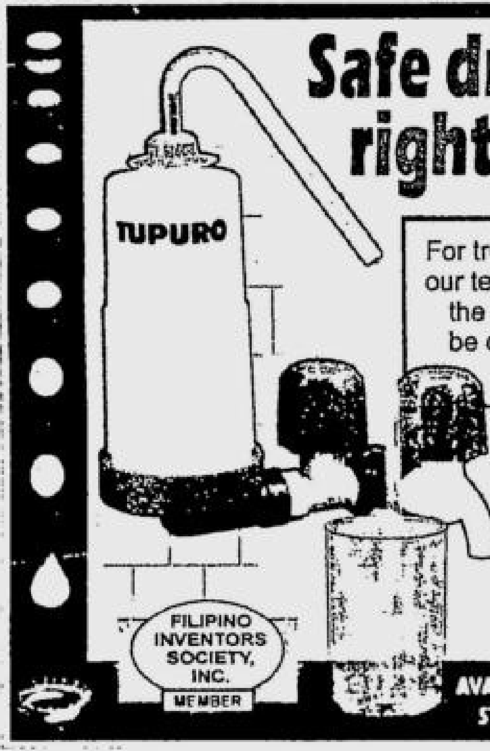

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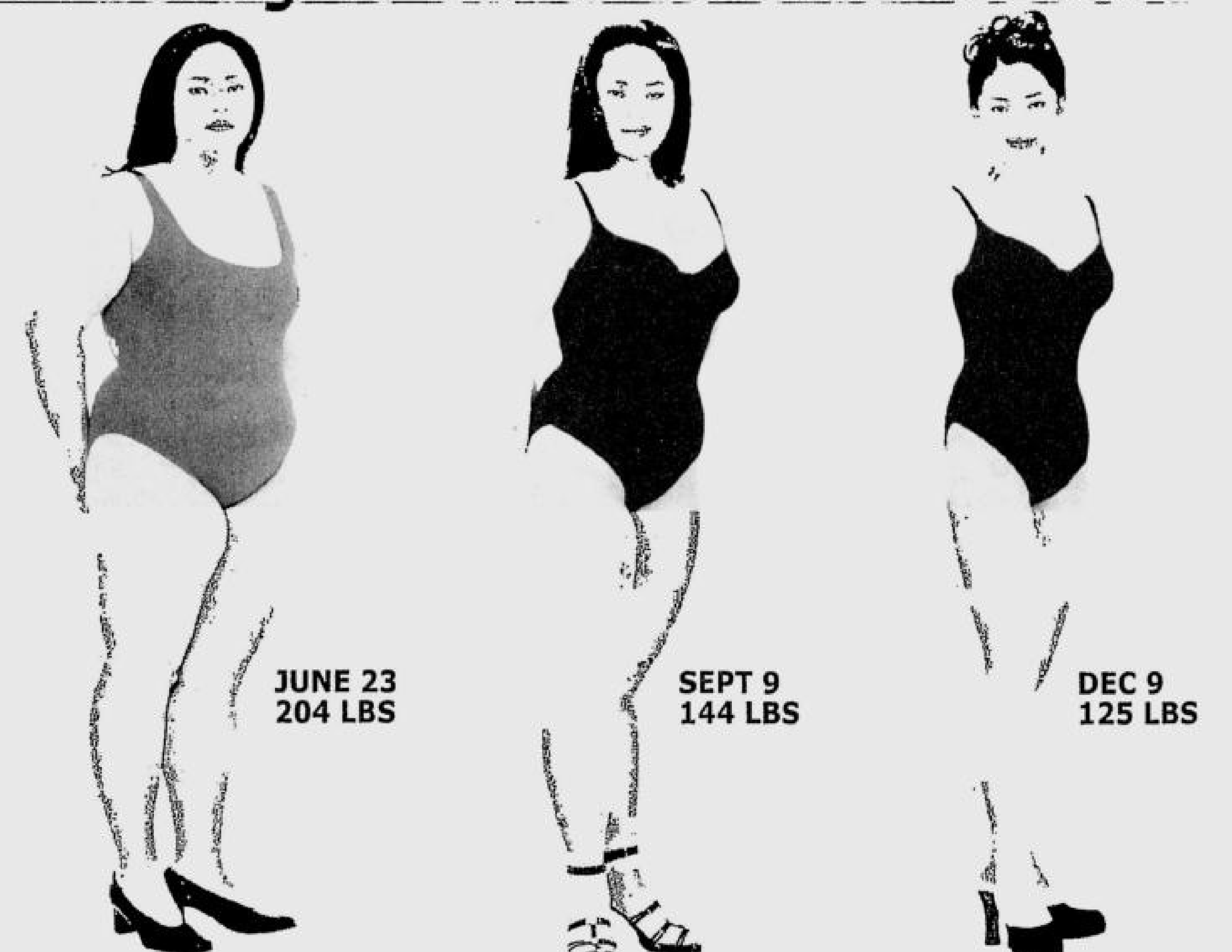

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RP wins tourism award for Pinatubo tours

KUALA LUMPUR—The lahar landscape in Pampanga and Zambales has been successfully converted by the Philippines into a centerpiece of an innovative tour package. And the whole of Asia and the Pacific has noticed.

In the recently held 50th annual conference of Pacific Asia Travel Association here, Tourism Secretary Richard Gordon received the PATA Gold Award on Ecotourism on behalf of the country and the Department of Tourism for the citation accorded the Mt. Pinatubo tours.

The strengthening of the Mt. Pinatubo tours was one of Gordon's early moves upon appointment as tourism secretary, according to a press statement from the tourism department. The package was developed by DOT Region 3 headed by Director Ronaldo Teotuico.

Gordon's receiving the award struck an emotional chord during the Gold Award luncheon ceremonies. In the early '90s, Gordon led Olongapo and Subic residents in literally building from the ashes the two areas severely damaged by Pinatubo ashfall. For a time, death in dark desolation was a distinct probability among people who were trapped in the area.

The occasion at the Putra World Trade Center was, however, joyous as the biggest gathering of Pacific Asia travel executives and officials cited milestones in tourism.

At the conference, Gordon took up the issue on the issuance of travel advisories against the Philippines, particularly by the United States and Japan.

He said those advisories severely hamper tourism strides by the Philippines as they picture the entire country as being unsafe. Gordon said the country now has to hurdle a major challenge of erasing a prevalent image of lawlessness and disorder and presenting the Philippines as a safe and pleasurable destination.

Gordon also met with Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad.

Aside from bilateral arrangements, the Philippines and Malaysia enjoy cooperation under the Asean and the BIMP-EAGA umbrellas.

A meeting by the tourism secretary with Malaysian Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir furthered talks on the need to increase the number of flights between Kuala Lumpur and Manila.

Kadir pledged to assist the Samal Island Resort in Samal Island off Davao to find fresh capital in the event current owners decide the sell the property. It is currently owned by the Ekran Berhad of Malaysia which chose to close the property after the drastic decrease in tourists in Mindanao in the aftermath of the Abu Sayyaf kidnapping.

"There is a deep sense of urgency for the improvement of Philippine tourism. We need to bounce back in tourism as it means the opening up of more job opportunities for Filipinos," he told newsmen.

Palace defends DPWH official

By A. N. Nocum

PRESIDENTIAL spokesperson Renato Corona yesterday said it was all right for President Macapagal-Arroyo to appoint a public works official to a high-level post inspite of the graft cases he is facing before the Sandiganbayan.

In an interview, Corona said the official, Florante Soriquez, is presumed innocent until he is convicted by the court.

"Maybe his appeal is pending. Until you are finally convicted or finally acquitted, you are presumed innocent. That is what the law says," Corona said of the cases Soriquez is facing before the Sandiganbayan.

The President has appointed Soriquez assistant secretary of the Department of Public Works and Highways, a move that has raised concerns among Palace officials.

Soriquez was linked to the P2.7-billion lahar megadike scam in San Fernando, Pampanga.

Soriquez, along with former Public Works Secretary Gregorio Vigilar, several engineers and the contractor of the dike have been accused of constructing a substandard dike, a huge portion of which collapsed during the lahar onslaught on Aug. 5, 1996.

Soriquez, who was then the director of the Mt. Pinatubo Rehabilitation Project Management Office of the Department of Public Works and Highways, was relieved from post for allegedly doing a faulty design of the dike.

Soriquez was appointed assistant secretary on March 22.

In an earlier interview, Soriquez said he was just a "fall guy" in the controversy and that he was confident that the Sandiganbayan may soon dismiss the cases against him.

He claims to have been close to Ms Macapagal since she was a senator.

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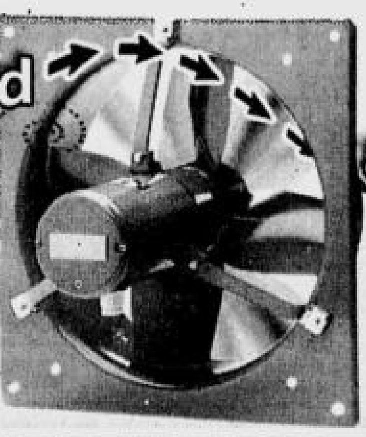

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Gov't aims to recoup SSS losses

By A. N. Nocum

THE GOVERNMENT will concentrate its efforts on recovering the money lost by the Social Security System during the previous administration, instead of making the fund's members pay for the losses through increased monthly contributions.

Malacañang officials said yesterday recovery of the funds might take only a year or two given the strong anti-graft and plunder cases that have been filed against former President Joseph Estrada and others who allegedly used the private SSS funds to transact personal business.

"The crucial point is the recovery (of lost investments). Recovery is the direction," Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo said of the government's tack for bringing the SSS back to fiscal health.

SSS chair and president Vitaliano Nañagas' earlier plan to increase the monthly dues paid into the system by its 23 million members has not been decided on with finality, Romulo said.

"There's nothing definite about it," he told the INQUIRER in a telephone interview.

Romulo said the government might not have too many problems recovering any stolen assets from the Estradas, compared to its dismal effort at recovering the alleged ill-gotten wealth of the late dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

"I don't think it will take us years to recover the investments gutted during the previous administration," Romulo said.

"The government has been quick in filing cases, getting witnesses... which never happened before," he said.

Romulo said even President Macapagal-Arroyo is more intent on recovering the investment losses rather than increasing monthly contributions.

"Ms Macapagal from the very beginning was for the recovery of the losses and bringing the transgressors to justice," Romulo said.

Estrada has been accused by his high school classmate Carlos Arellano, who headed the SSS in the previous administration, of forcing him (Arellano) to invest sizable SSS funds in private transactions to benefit Estrada and his cronies.

The transactions are believed to have netted Estrada and several cronies huge profits in the stock market.

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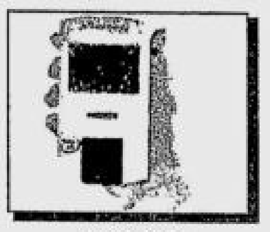

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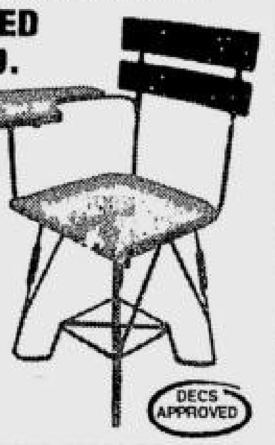

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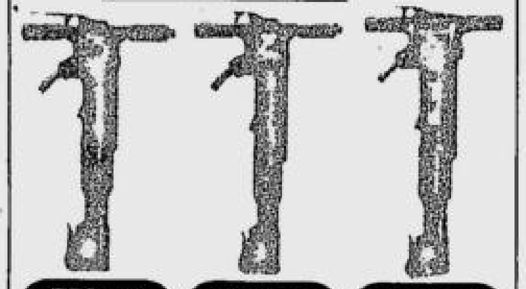

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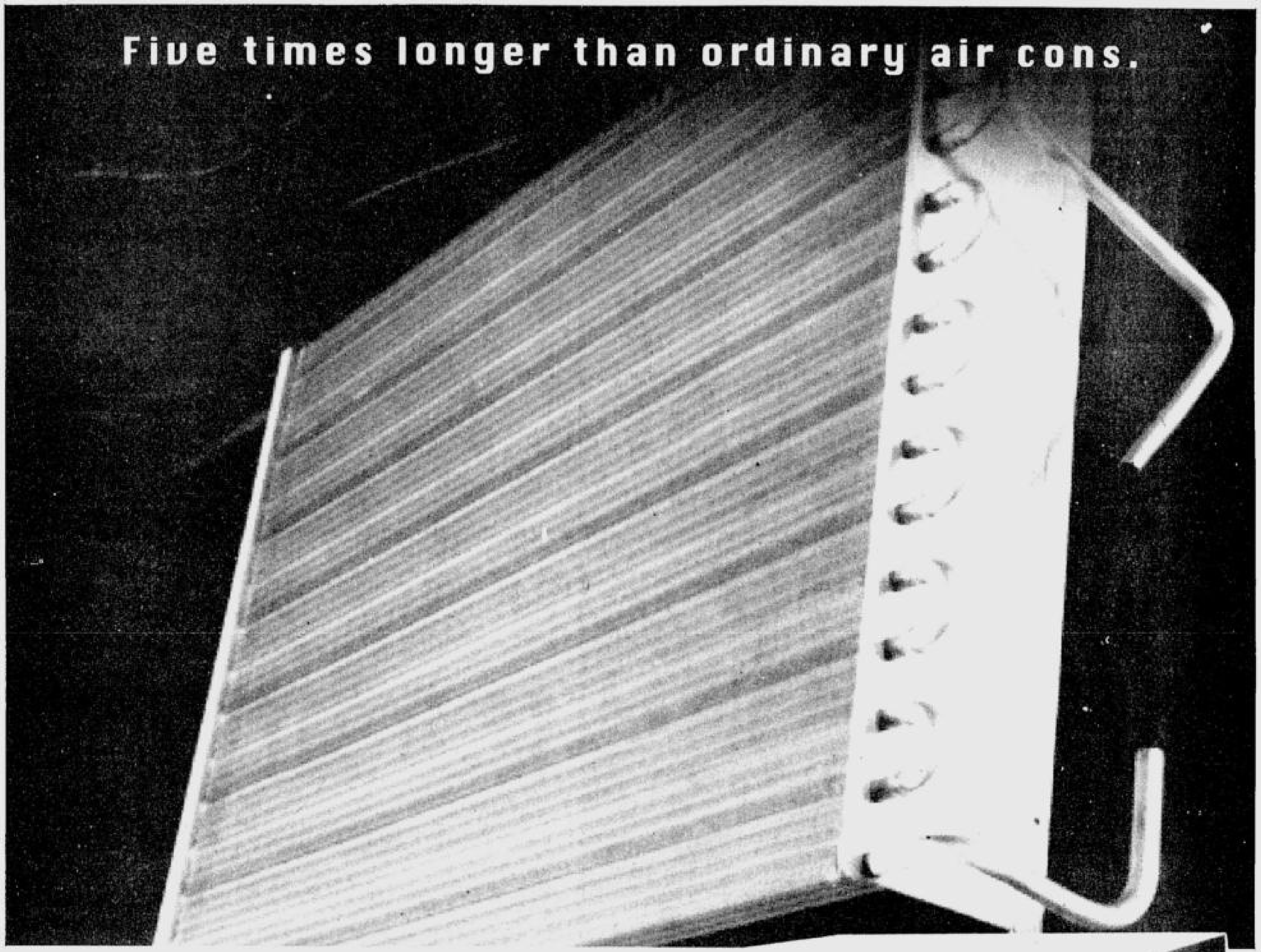

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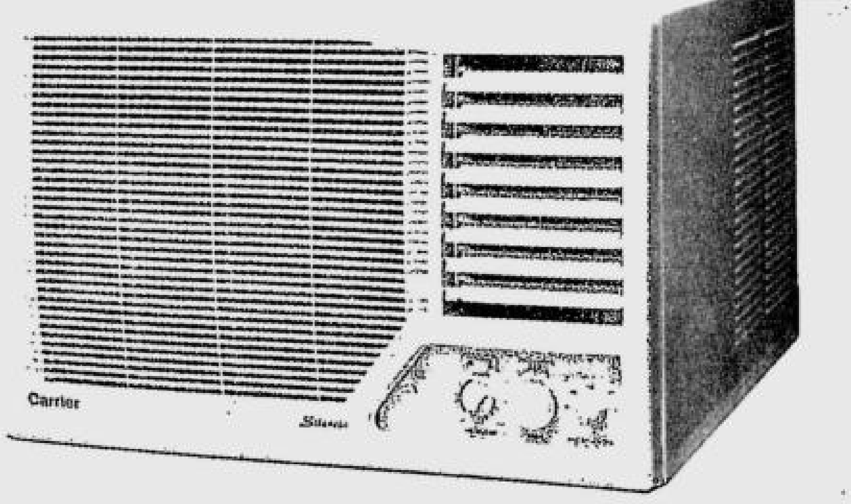

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UP to honor Davide in graduation rites

THE UNIVERSITY of the Philippines will confer a doctor of laws, honoris causa, on Chief Justice Hilario Davide Jr. on Sunday at the University Amphitheater in Diliman.

The conferment coincides with the commencement exercises in UP Diliman where Davide is the commencement speaker.

An alumnus of the UP College of Law, Davide taught the nation the meaning of the rule of law as presiding justice of the Impeachment Court that tried deposed President Joseph Estrada.

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Thai cops nab 2 Pinoys in fake bonds scam

BANGKOK—Thai police on Thursday seized fake US Treasury bonds with a face value of $24.7 billion from a safe in the Deutsche Bank, and arrested four people—two Filipinos, a Singaporean and a Thai.

Deputy national police chief Gen. Sant Sarutanont said the three men and one woman were arrested at the German bank's main office in Bangkok. They were charged with attempting to deceive and possessing illegal bank notes, which is punishable by life imprisonment.

Sant said a sting operation was launched after receiving a tip off from Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra. He did not say how Thaksin knew about the scam.

Police went to the bank with Thaksin's younger brother, Payap Shinawatra, using him as a decoy to contact the group with the purported aim of buying the bonds. Once contact was made, police arrested the suspects and seized the bills, Sant said.

He said three gold coins and a microfilm were also seized from the safe. Payap had previously obtained photocopies of the bonds, which were confirmed as fakes by the US Embassy on Wednesday.

The four were identified as Jacqueline Enriquez, 29, and Robert Ng, 43, of the Philippines; Tan Ho Ghee, 39, a Singaporean and Chayari Santivongchai, 44, a Thai.

The bonds appear to be the same ones used in a nonexistent treasure hunt sparked by a maverick senator's claim that he had found 67-year-old US bonds worth $25 billion and 2,500 tons of gold in a cave in the western province of Kanchanaburi province.

Sen. Chaovarin Lathasaksiri showed off photocopies of the bonds, which turned out to be fakes, abruptly ending the treasure hunt in the Lichea cave that was sanctioned by Thaksin.

Sant said he believed the serial numbers on the photocopies in Chaovarin's possession matched with those of the confiscated bonds.

"We will investigate further to see if there is a link with the Lichea scam," Sant said.

Earlier Thursday, Thaksin said investigators had ascertained that Chaovarin's bonds did not come from the cave, but that the senator might have been tricked into believing they had.

An official search party that was excavating the Lichea cave, about 200 km west of Bangkok, retreated on Tuesday while Chaovarin admitted he had been duped. He later said that he had never seen the treasure or the bonds personally.

Similar fake US bonds with a face value of $2 trillion were seized in February in the Philippines. In Thailand, stories have circulated for decades about hidden booty left behind by retreating Japanese forces during the World War II in 1945.

While Chaovarin has borne the brunt of ridicule, Thaksin has also been chastised for lending credibility to the senator's claim. *AP*

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Overcharge costing each consumer up to P20,000 a year–JPE

SEN. Juan Ponce Enrile yesterday resumed his crusade against Meralco, saying the Lopez-owned power firm had abused the computation of its return on rate base (RORB) which resulted in overcharging of up to P20,000 a year per consumer.

Enrile said each consumer stands to absorb another P1,000 to P10,000 a year in additional charges if the government allows Meralco to charge the public for the profits from a "sweetheart" power supply contract that they negotiated with the family-owned First Gas Power.

Meralco's abuse of RORB rules as exemplified by its claim that it was getting only a 5.5 percent RORB when in fact it is charging 10.88 percent according to a report from the Office of the Solicitor General, adds at least 10 percent to the monthly electric bills of consumers, Enrile said.

The Return-on-Rate-Base is the maximum profit than an electric utility can legally make. In turn, it determines the electric rate to be charged consumers.

Enrile explained that the Lopez Group, which controls Meralco, is lobbying hard to recover from the government and ultimately, from electric consumers, the equivalent of 50 centavos per kwh in additional stranded costs for First Gas Power which it is not entitled to get.

Stranded costs are obligations to be paid by the government and ultimately by consumers through additional monthly charges to cover losses to be incurred when Napocor is privatized, specifically for the mitigation of its contracts with independent power producers (IPPs) under the proposed Omnibus Power Bill.

Enrile, a member of the bicameral conference committee tackling the proposed Omnibus Power Bill, has embarked on a crusade against what he called abuses by Meralco. Yesterday, he put out full page newspaper ads urging President Macapagal-Arroyo to protect rural electric cooperative from what he called anti-consumer and monopolistic provisions on the Omnibus Power Bill.

Left takes to hustings with gusto

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE LEFT, to which traditional politics had always been anathema, is taking to the hustings with gusto after all by endorsing candidates running for the Senate in the May 14 polls.

The party-list group Bayan Muna and organizations allied with the Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) have formally endorsed the administration's People Power Coalition senatorial slate except for Franklin Drilon and Ernesto Herrera Jr.

Bayan Muna also urged the electorate to vote for independent senatorial bet Perfecto Yasay Jr. while asking them to dump candidates allied with disgraced former President Joseph Estrada.

"Aside from their anti-Estrada stand, each of these senatorial candidates has established ties of concrete cooperation and active unity with Bayan Muna," said Satur Ocampo, Bayan Muna party-list candidate.

Bayan Muna endorsed Wigberto Tañada, Robert Pagdanganan, Liwayway Chato, Solita Monsod, Ralph Recto, Joker Arroyo, Francis Pangilinan, Manny Villar, Ramon Magsaysay Jr., Sergio Osmeña III, Juan Flavier and Yasay for senator.

The endorsements mean the highly organized militant groups would campaign for the 12 candidates while the groups in turn would receive material support from the candidates.

"There are practical considerations. Bayan Muna is campaigning nationwide but we don't have enough resources," Ocampo said.

He said Herrera was not picked because of his "strong statements against the Left" and his "trade union." Herrera is a prominent member of the Trade Union Congress of the Philippines (TUCP), which is a rival of the militant Kilusang Mayo Uno that is allied with Bayan.

Drilon was excluded because he "could not find a minute to talk to us," Ocampo said.

But, he added, Bayan Muna would not campaign against Drilon and Herrera.

Ocampo also dismissed allegations Bayan Muna and its allied organizations have "sold out" by entering electoral politics.

"We aim to change and supplant traditional politicians. But we're starting from zero. To achieve a foothold, we need to relate with politicians, especially the progressives," he said.

"In the meantime, we pressure them to support our own brand of politics," Ocampo said.

He said Bayan Muna was "very conscious" about not being "coopted by the system."

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Creba says party-list not just for the marginalized

THE CHAMBER of Real Estate and Builders' Association said Akbayan Rep. Loreta Rosales was misguided in claiming that the party list is exclusively for the marginalized sectors.

In a press statement, Creba also accused Akbayan of dishonesty and grandstanding at the expense of the legitimate party list candidates when it filed a petition, on baseless and malicious grounds, for the Comelec to delist Creba and other organizations.

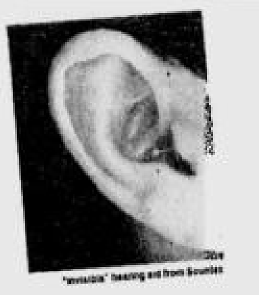
The Comelec should instead carefully scrutinize the funding sources of Akbayan, to determine whether it violates RA 7941 which disqualifies party list aspirants that receive "support from any foreign political party, foundation, organization, whether directly or through any of its officers or members or indirectly through third parties."

Creba stressed that the Constitution does not limit participation in the party list only to the marginalized sectors. In the records of the Constitutional Commission (Concom), the proposal to open all the party list seats to all sectors, whether marginalized or not, was overwhelmingly approved by a plenary session vote of 32 to zero.

However, Creba said, the Concom decided to give the marginalized sectors a concession, by providing under Article VI Section 5 of the Constitution that for three consecutive terms after its ratification, one-half (50 percent) of the twenty percent (20 percent) of all seats in Congress which are allocated to the party list shall be reserved for the marginalized sectors.

Creba stressed that this concessionary three-consecutive-term period in the Constitution had expired in 1998, and therefore all of the congressional seats reserved for the party list are now open to all national, regional or sectoral parties or organizations, whether or not marginalized.

Citing the Concom journals, Creba said that the proposal to "perpetualize" beyond the 3-consecutive-term period the reservation of party list seats for the "marginalized" sectors, even at only 50 percent of the total party list seat allocation, was rejected in plenary session by a vote of 22 to 19.



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Criminal crime busters

EDITORIAL

GOOD Friday came five days late for some police officers in Camp Crame. The INQUIRER reported that "gloom and doom" descended on the headquarters of the Philippine National Police Wednesday as top police officials carried out the order of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo disbanding the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF).

Why anyone in his right mind would lament the abolition of that task force is hard to understand. Created as an anti-crime superbody soon after Joseph Estrada assumed the presidency in 1998 and placed under the command of Estrada's most trusted police officer, PNP Director General Panfilo Lacson, the PAOCTF appears to have quickly evolved into the biggest, best organized and most ruthless criminal syndicate to operate in this country.

In its earlier incarnation as the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission under then Vice President Estrada, the group was credited with turning back the wave of bank robberies sweeping over Metro Manila. And in the first months of its existence, the PAOCTF won recognition from civilian anti-crime groups for bringing down the number of kidnappings for ransom.

All those bright accomplishments are now being overshadowed by ugly revelations about not only the PAOCTF's shadowy links with crime syndicates but also its direct involvement in some of the most sensational crimes committed during the Estrada administration. Indeed, if the findings of the PNP under its new chief, Director General Leandro Mendoza, are to be believed, the solution of some crimes was intended to hide even bigger crimes committed by the PAOCTF itself. Confidential intelligence reports used by PNP officials in briefing the President blame the task force for the following crimes, among others:

- The disappearance of Edgar Bentain, who is believed to have leaked video clips of Estrada playing baccarat in a Pagcor casino.
- The abduction and killing of two female relatives of Alfredo de Leon, leader of the Red Scorpion Gang.
- The abduction of PAOCTF agent Roger Brusas, who was reportedly privy to a multimillion-peso illegal drug deal.
- The beheading of 10 suspected members of a kidnap gang in Baguio.
- The disappearances of several persons who had conducted some "business" with the task force.
- The abduction and murder of PR man Salvador Dacer and his driver, in which several PAOCTF agents and officials have been implicated, including the former PAOCTF chief for the Visayas, Senior Supt. Teofilo Viña, and a key lieutenant of Lacson, Senior Supt. Michael Ray Aquino.

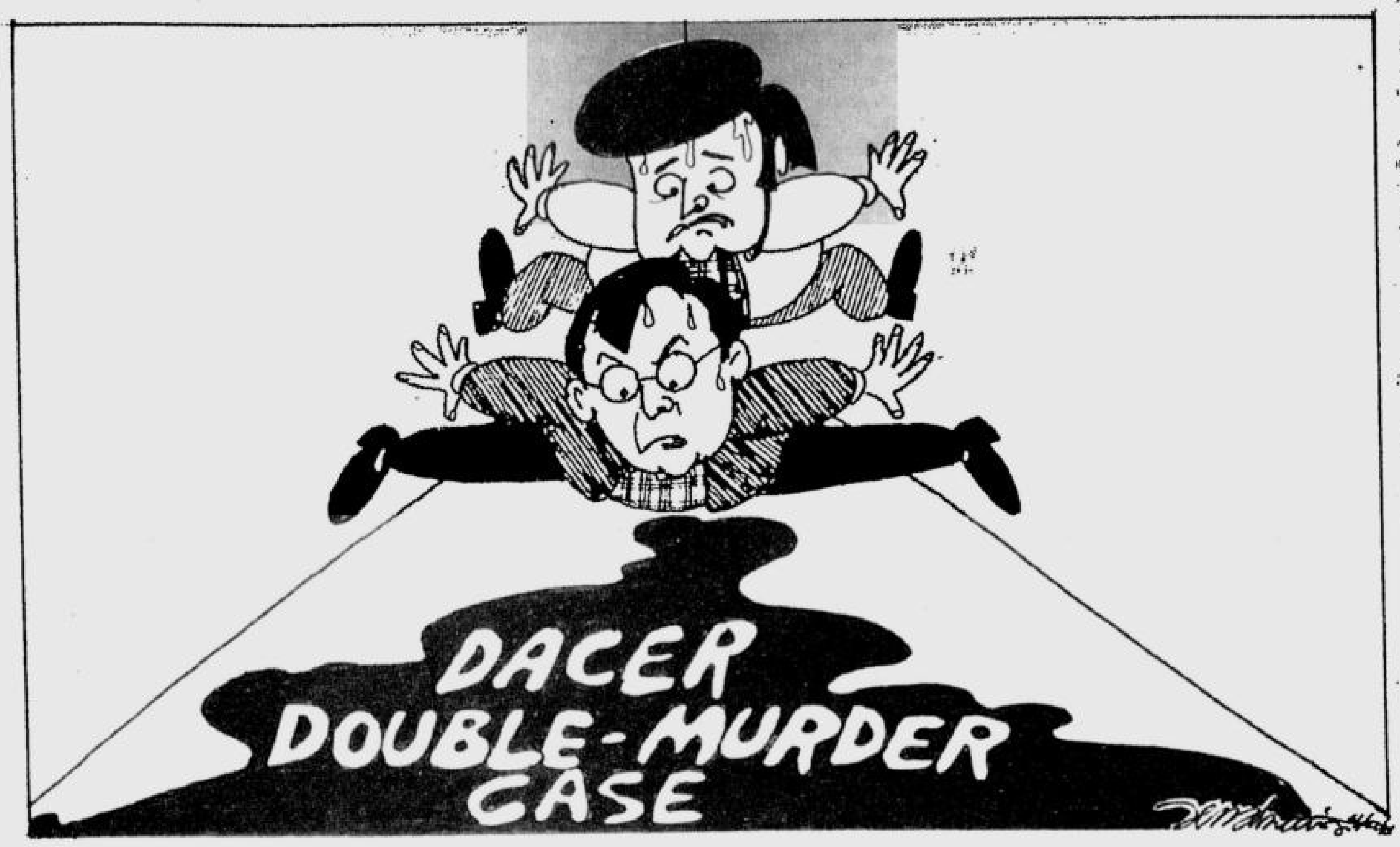
There is a host of other crimes attributed to the PAOCTF, including money laundering, real estate fraud and drug trafficking, but the conclusion is the same: The anti-crime body had metamorphosed into a crime gang itself. The intelligence documents detail how the task force set loose on society some underground characters like robbers and kidnappers, only to "neutralize" them when they became notorious so that it could claim another victory in the war against crime.

In other words, by the time Estrada was toppled from power, the PAOCTF had turned into a Frankenstein's monster that had gone berserk. And much as Lacson and his men would deny them, the evidence of the group's criminal activities must have been so convincing that Ms Macapagal was forced to abolish the task force immediately instead of giving it another year to shape up and prove itself as she had earlier promised.

The Macapagal administration and the PNP itself, however, cannot afford to just leave things where they are. The abolition of the PAOCTF is but a first, if necessary, step in reforming the police organization. But before any reform can take place, all those responsible for these terrible crimes should be meted out the harshest punishment the law allows.

Interior Secretary Jose Lina is correct: an inventory should be made of the crimes committed by officials and members of the PAOCTF and everyone involved should be brought before the courts. These crimes cry out for vengeance not only because of their viciousness and cruelty but also because they were directed and executed by agents of the law.

And let no one cry political persecution in this campaign season. The law should be allowed to take its course even in the middle of a political contest. More so in these cases because witnesses have been known to disappear or lose interest when Lacson's men start moving. If justice will be made to wait, chances are it will never get done.



Good guys shouldn't finish last

THERE'S THE RUB

Conrado de Quiros

AT LAST Cory and I have something in common. Both of us will have Bobby Tañada at the head of our list when we vote.

Cory figures she owes the Tañadas enormously for helping her come to power. Both Tanny and Bobby were pillars of the anti-Marcos campaign, enduring tear gas and water cannons in Mendiola—there's a very nice picture of father and son, arms locked with each other and with the other marchers at the foot of the Mendiola Bridge, shouting at the enemy—and helping put an end to tyranny.

I myself figure I owe the Tañadas enormously for helping us come to our senses. Or for making this country better for their having been in it. They did help push back tyranny, if not end it—which continued well past Marcos. Bobby in particular was the key figure in ending the reign of the US bases in the Philippines. Jovito Salonga was the Senate president who banged the gavel to toll the death of the bases treaty. But Bobby Tañada was the senator who worked quietly to make it possible, with no small help from his father, the eternal nationalist, who lent moral force to the cause.

By that time, Cory had become the ogre she slew, she and Dick Gordon—no relation to Flash, every relation to Tricky—trying desperately to stop the march of reason, if not history, by bamboozling the senators into submission. Cory in particular tried to summon people power again, this time to the Luneta, and merely succeeded in gathering *hakot* power, doing a parody of Marcos. At the end of the day, it was the Tañadas who stood tall at the pillars of the Senate while rain fell on the crowd that danced below.

Ironically, Dick Gordon, who had shouted at the top of his voice that you could not eat sovereignty, ate the fruits of the Tañadas' labor and became SBMA head. Ironically, Dick Gordon, who tried to sell the country down the drain, has become the No. 1 seller of the country—he is the current tourist secretary—down the drain.

Even more ironically, Bobby Tañada stands in danger of not going back to the Senate he served so well and proudly. If the surveys are to be believed, he remains outside the threshold of the "Magic 13."

You sometimes wonder what kind of people we are that we so readily reward the guilty and punish the innocent. But, well, I am glad at least that Cory has said those things about Bobby. There is one other person that has made me wonder what kind of country we have, clinging as she does, like Bobby, in the lower rungs of the top 15 in surveys. She is Winnie Monsod. She and Bobby do not make it to the Senate, and we truly deserve the clowns we'll get.

I've been pressed by no small number of letter-writers to say whom I'm going to vote for in the elections. I leave the others for later, but Bobby Tañada and Winnie Monsod are the ones I want to push for more than anybody else. It's not merely because they're last among the heard, it's also because they're first among the qualified. Indeed, nothing can be more ironic than that the best candidates should be least accorded the adulation they deserve.

You go by any criteria you want for an ideal public official, and you'll always tick them off ahead of the others. You want personal virtue, which is what the righteous among us want, you won't find anyone more personally virtuous than them. Or at least they are personally virtuous in ways that edify public office, or in ways that help a country get past hell and not merely themselves get to heaven. They are honest, they are hardworking, they are principled. Or to put it in ways voters of this country understand, they do not steal, they do not lie, they do not cheat. The way things are today, these are virtues in the extreme among prospective public officials.

You want qualifications, which is what the liberal among us want, you won't find anyone more qualified than them. Tañada has a record of achievement in the Senate longer than Erap's record of plunder with the Ombudsman. And that is long. The only problem, in fact is that Bobby, who has never been known to advertise himself, refuses to talk about them, preferring to let his work to speak for itself. Alas, to a country that may not be able to distinguish senators from soap. Little wonder Panfilo Lacson is advertising himself as a detergent. Though some blood, as Lady Macbeth doth say, is not so easily wiped off the murderous hand.

Winnie, well, I've always thought she was the one person who showed up the hollowness of Miriam Defensor-Santiago. She is the one person who shows the difference between *matalino* and *magulang*, wise and shrewd, intelligent and calculating. Indeed, she is the one person who shows what it really means to be educated. As academic credentials go, she has more letters after her name than Miriam, which have the added virtue of being real—Miriam's are invented. You can check them at the schools she studied. But it's more than that, it's also that she shows that being really educated is not just being able to spout gobbledygook—though she knows more economic gobbledygook than Miriam knows legal ones, being Cory's Neda head and chief economic adviser—it's being able to apply the principle of the gobbledygook for the good of dy gooks and gobblers.

What makes Winnie even more special is that while having the most academic credentials among the candidates, she has also the most experience communicating directly to the public among them. She can speak the language of priest and layman, the language of economist and journalist, the language of expert and TV host. As the other part of the tandem of Mare at Pare, she has managed to extricate issues in ways the public can understand. She has never patronized the masses either by talking above their heads, like Miriam, or by talking below them, like Erap. She has insisted merely being, well, herself. I like her candor and passion in discussions, even her partisanship in them. I've always thought being a journalist, or moderator, merely meant you ought to listen to both sides, it doesn't mean you ought to believe both of them. It merely meant you ought to be fair, it doesn't mean you ought to be dumb.

On top of everything, you won't find two more genuinely decent people on this planet. These are nice guys in ways that give whole new meanings to nice. Nice guys don't have to finish last.

Well, it's all up to you. But if I were you, this May, I'd remember Juan Ponce Enrile and Miriam Defensor-Santiago—and vote Bobby Tañada and Winnie Monsod.

Note: While Neal Cruz is on vacation, Conrado de Quiros' column will occupy this space on Thursdays and Fridays except when Cruz is able to send his column.—**Ed.**

A tale of two voices

WINDMILLS

Jerry Barican

THERE are those who refuse to accept the existence of evil in this world. And yet it exists. To eternal believers, Stalin's 30 million victims are euphemized as mere "excesses." Oops. Pol Pot's killing fields are explained away as the work of misguided elements. Sorry. Hitler unfortunately just carried eugenics to extremes. Take two aspirins and call me in the morning. Besides, these people tell us, the Holocaust was really a myth, or at the least a gross exaggeration of reality. Tell us about it.

To some optimists, peace is the only legitimate goal, even if it is the peace of surrender or of the graveyard or if, as Tacitus said of the Romans, "they made a desert and called it peace." One may respect Neville Chamberlain and Lord Halifax for their lack of guile and their sincerity, but Halifax at least outlived World War II which millions of others, victims of his pusillanimity at Munich, did not.

Should we have peace with the CPP-NPA? Yes, resoundingly. But it must be a principled peace. The exchange is simple. Renounce violence and the armed struggle. Accept the admittedly more difficult road of electoral struggle. In exchange, receive a full amnesty—in law, a pardon forgives, an amnesty forgets—and every reasonable incentive to pave the path to peace.

But is this the transaction that is about to take place in the peace talks with the CPP-NPA-NDF (despite the multiple acronyms, we are talking about the same people) and the government? There is reason to doubt it. It is not just because we must have learned something from our past negotiations with them. Under President Aquino, the government's good faith in the talks was betrayed. The talks were strategically used to permit unhindered movement of CPP cadres and political activists. The media were engulfed with party propaganda, the NDF taking full advantage of what it called democratic space. Since the talks were not based on reciprocal goodwill, they eventually collapsed, but not before the CPP had used the interval to strengthen its military and political reach.

Today, those safe conduct guarantees are being used in much the same way. The NDF representatives are everywhere, Dr. Jekyll-sounding-like voices of moderation. But the political language of the party, like that of Mr. Hyde, is as virulent as ever.

Here is the authentic party's voice issued by Mr. Sison from the Netherlands: "It is of crucial importance that the GRP-NDFP peace negotiations first address the roots of civil war before there can be an end of armed hostilities. x x x The only way for the GRP to persuade the NDFP to agree to an indefinite nationwide mutual ceasefire, prior to the comprehensive agreements on social, economic and political reforms, is for the GRP to recognize the political authority and territory of the people's democratic government."

This is not the language of negotiation, but of duplicity. While the NDF representatives claim to be canvassing for peace, Mr. Sison, the party's undisputed leader and paramount ideologue, is saying several things that directly contradict the posture of peace.

First, and most obviously, there is the continued, ceaseless claim by Mr. Sison and his associates to represent not just a party or a movement but a separate government. This claim, openly repeated by the CPP, puts paid to the self-deluded assurances of the government's peace negotiators that the holding of talks abroad, under the aegis of a "neutral" government, does not confer belligerent status on the NDF. If there is a neutral third government, there must be two other governments to be neutral to that, that is, the Republic's and the NDF's. If there is a "civil war," you have two competing governments as well.

There is more. We have offered a Somo, a unilateral ceasefire. We have released hundreds of arrested insurgents, guilty of a host of human rights crimes from mass murder and kidnapping to intimidation and torture. This mass release was done with little fanfare, while the CPP has converted the release of a solitary military officer into a media circus to propagandize their claimed goodwill.

Now the CPP says it cannot join that government ceasefire until all its political and military demands ("the root causes of civil war") are first met or until the governmental authority of the CPP is recognized. I have a modest suggestion for our so-called negotiators. Why not just hand the CPP the title deeds and keys to Malacañang and be done with it? There will be no need for the charade of negotiation if what we are negotiating for is a surrender. We might as well be quick and be done with it.

This farce cannot be permitted to go on indefinitely. The government is behaving like a champion in a 10-round fight with a challenger, telling him that he will handcuff his own hands behind him for the first three rounds but the challenger had better obey the rules or he will knock him out in the fourth round. This, to put it kindly, is the mind-set of a nincompoop.

What we need to see above all is some sign of genuine good faith from the CPP-NPA-NDF. Beyond the platitudes and motherhood babble, we need clear and convincing evidence that **both** sides are making a serious effort to end this 60-year insurgency. For now, the extreme dissonance between Mr. Jalandoni's sweet words in Manila and Mr. Sison's harsh ones in the Netherlands suggest it is not peace but duplicity we are looking forward to.

China wards off hostile human rights resolution

NEWS ANALYSIS

Peter Harmsen

BEIJING—China on Thursday gleefully claimed victory over the United States after it succeeded in beating back a resolution at the UN Human Rights Commission that would have condemned Beijing's record of abuses and demanded improvements.

Editorials ridiculed Washington and accused the United States of having ulterior motives in sponsoring the draft resolution that was blocked by a procedural motion backed by 23 of the forum's 53 members at a meeting in Geneva Wednesday.

"The United States is too arrogant to follow common sense, and too dull-witted to realize that to make the same blunder twice, or even 10 times, is foolish as well as being ill-considered," the English-language China Daily said in an editorial.

Beijing has managed to ward off hostile resolutions with the same procedure at the UN Human Rights Commission 10 times since 1990.

An analysis carried by the state-run Xinhua news agency slammed US criticism of China's rights record.

"Washington does not want to see China building socialism with Chinese characteristics and enjoying political stability and rapid economic development," said the analysis.

Beijing's fear of a new world order where the United States as the lone surviving superpower calls the shots is reflected in its hostility to the planned US anti-missile defense shield, as well as its stance in the ongoing spy plane row, according to analysts.

Chinese officials urged the United States to abandon its current approach to human rights and start conducting exchanges on the basis of equality and mutual respect.

> 'The proportion of poor has fallen to a historic low, while the living standards of the people have been raised greatly'

"We would advise the US side to change its practice, realize its errors and mend its way, and return to the right track of dialogue as soon as possible," foreign ministry spokesperson Zhang Qiyue was quoted as saying by Xinhua.

Editorial writers in several media reiterated an oft-pronounced Chinese viewpoint that human rights are comprehensive and not just confined to political rights.

The idea that China has improved its rights record by pulling millions out of poverty over the past two decades was given ample space in several opinion pieces.

"The past few years have seen China's economy and society develop by leaps and bounds, accompanied by an improvement in its overall human rights situation," the mass-circulation People's Daily said in an editorial.

"The proportion of poor has fallen to a historic low, while the living standards of the people have been raised greatly," said the paper, which is the communist party's main mouthpiece.

Chinese media also fired back at America's own rights record, criticizing areas such as abuses of power by the police, racial and gender discrimination and unfair judicial practices.

"While posing as a role model of human rights, the United States has failed to see the serious human rights problems haunting its own territory," the China Daily said in its editorial.

To underscore its point, the paper carried a cartoon of Uncle Sam sitting on the back of a subdued African American while exclaiming, in an apparent address to China: "Human rights records in these areas are terrible."

China has recently been more vigorous in its criticism of the United States' own rights record in an attempt to highlight what it sees as Washington's hypoorisy over the issue.

In late February, China's cabinet issued a report entitled "US Human Rights Record in 2000," in response to the State Department's annual report on the state of human rights in countries around the world.

AFP

Bombshells and negative campaigns

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

CANDIDATE for mayor of Manila "Katapat" Fred Lim wrote in response to a recent column on an "exposé" he unleashed against one of his opponents, incumbent Mayor Lito Atienza, during a taping of the TV show "Isyu 101" that, strangely, was no longer part of the final version that aired.

During the taping, Lim accused Atienza of being a chum of an alleged drug trafficker by the name of Kim Wong. To which Atienza replied that it was Lim who had introduced him to Wong.

The imputation, says Lim, "is quite inaccurate." Wong, said Lim, had contributed to both of their campaigns in the last two elections, but all this time Lim knew Wong only "as an agent of a shirt factory, a legitimate business." In fact, it was only last March that Lim says he got to know of Wong's alleged involvement in drugs. This was when former police informant Mary Rose Ong disclosed on his radio show that Wong was under surveillance not just for alleged drug trafficking, but also for the disappearance of an associate.

After the '98 elections, alleges Lim, "Atienza and Wong became close friends and associates...a permanent (fixture) in the office of Atienza, became big time and attended (even) the WPD Police Station Commanders Conference and department heads meeting at the Mayor's office."

The defusing of this bombshell through its deletion from the final aired show was "the editor's prerogative of which I had nothing to do," says Lim, though "I would have highly appreciated it if this portion had not been deleted." Lim complains that also deleted from the taped proceedings was his challenge to Atienza "that if I could prove that he never deposited about P200 million Pagcor assistance to the city treasurer's office while he was the vice mayor...then he would withdraw his candidacy for mayor."

Perhaps Manila's voters should demand to see the full and unedited proceedings, the better to judge for themselves who's best suited to lead their city for the next three years.

* * *

I'M always thrilled to get feedback from readers, especially those living abroad. It's a thrill not even the familiarity of e-mail can dampen. But here's one reaction that had me thoroughly amused.

"Dodoy," reacting to a column on an "anti-Miriam movement" a-borning, writes from the United States that he'd long been wondering how he could, as an expat, continue to help his homeland despite living abroad. In America, he reflects, "Words are not enough! We need numbers. I do not need your nice words, put it in my paycheck!" Which is why, he relates he thought of communicating to his relatives and barrio mates in Iloilo—through letters, phone calls and e-mail—that if Puwer(s)a (a)ng Masa candidates Honasan, Santiago and Enrile get less than 10 votes (out of a possible 250), he would send them P5,000 to buy an entire *lechon*. And if the three get zero votes, "I will send them $200." Adds Dodoy: "*Atat na atat ang mga kabataang baranggay doon at mga kamaganak namin. Gusto nilang ZEROHIN itong tatlo*...Let us wait and see...I am talking to my cousins and relatives here in the States to sponsor other barrios in our town...A small portion of our paychecks will help the nation...GOD BLESS !!"

* * *

STILL on the anti-Miriam crusade, Budji Salceda wrote to ask where s/he could pick up "campaign" materials because s/he'd like to spread the word among friends and family in Bicol. "They would be very delighted to receive such campaign materials," writes Budji, who's also asking for materials on Abanse! Pinay. I hope Rosanna Fores and Co. are reading this. They can get in touch with Budji at kulot@jbdnet.com. As for Abanse! Pinay materials, Budji, please call tel. nos. 434-2904 or 434-3998, or drop by the campaign headquarters at 46 Maginhawa St., UP Village, Quezon City. Abanse! Pinay is also in need of volunteers.

Andy Pelaez, who claims with some dismay to be a distant relative of Miriam on his paternal side, writes to say he is "fully in favor" of the campaign against the *senadora*. "Almost all our relatives (in Iloilo) are angry and upset at all the things she's been doing especially her embracing the immoralities of Estrada and making herself a 'slave' to Estrada just because of many 'evil favors' she got from her master. Frankly, even though I am 7,400 miles from my beloved motherland, I am daily campaigning every time I see a Filipino (not to) vote for Miriam Defensor-Santiago." Andy assures: "We are praying hard and we see somehow some light...these evil forces will not triumph again."

* * *

FINALLY, from Robert Arciaga, a regular correspondent by now, comes this message about Orly Mercado and Robert Aventajado, the subjects of a recent column. "I think Orly Mercado merits breaking out of 'limbo,'" says Robert. "He has always been a fine worker and is doing the forthright thing, presenting himself as a regular candidate, for the people to decide. "As for Mr. Aventajado, I think he should stay in 'limbo' until he proves he was not 'skimming' off the ransom payments to the Abu Sayyaf. Question is, why is the Macapagal administration showing success in pursuing the Abus and rescuing hostages, whereas during Aventajado's time, the Estrada administration could not move against the Abu? Was it because 'arrangements' had to be finalized first with regard to the ransom payments?"

As for Aventajado's claim of being a legitimate representative of overseas Filipino workers, Arciaga notes that the United States is not a hardship posting, and in fact could be considered a "paradise" for overseas Filipinos. "So what claim does Aventajado have regarding gathering 'experience' (akin to) that of overseas workers?" Arciaga also wants to know why Aventajado "is using a back-door, party-list approach to his candidacy? Why not face the issue squarely with the people, like Orly is doing?"

Rice, the staff of life

LOOKING BACK

Ambeth R. Ocampo

RICE is one of the things we see every day, but fail to notice. For example, I was raised on a special kind of rice—courtesy of doting Pampanga relatives—called the *milagrosa* which visitors made such a fuss about. People who used to patronize the San Fernando *turo-turo*, Everybody's Café, would talk endlessly about the *milagrosa* served there as if it were ordinary. For me it was plain, white, steaming everyday rice. I had never looked closely at its small grains, sniffed its fragrance, or swooned over its supposedly delicate flavor. I only noticed the *milagrosa* when we ran out of it and were fed something else. Rice was rice and I only appreciated the *milagrosa* during a shortage when the school canteen gave us a soggy dirty-looking rice mixed with corn. Later in life I learned that the *milagrosa* was special because it was grown in limited quantities and was available only at certain times of the year. Since it was more expensive than other readily available rice, it was doubly precious. Last year, while browsing, in a Filipino store in the Chicago suburbs, I saw they had sacks of *milagrosa*. What shocked me was that this *milagrosa* was imported from Thailand!

Come to think of it, I have not noticed that the fragrant rice I have been eating of late is not the *milagrosa* anymore but jasmine rice from Thailand. It is ironic that a country that houses the International Rice Research Institute (Irri) in Los Baños now imports rice from neighboring Thailand. The Irri was set up decades ago when the Philippines was a leader in rice production. Today, Filipino rice-growers have stiff competition from cheaper, cleaner, more filling Thai rice. Worse, this situation is not confined to rice. Visit a market or grocery today and be shocked that imported apples are cheaper than home-grown mangoes. So much has changed in my own lifetime that digging up data on rice for the Conference on the Philosophy and Politics of Southeast Asian Food in New York University (which opened yesterday) made me confront my ignorance.

Rice, before it is available in our kitchens, grows in wet fields or in the magnificent Rice Terraces of the Cordilleras. They are rather flimsy looking stalks that Doreen Fernandez has called the "staff of life." The earliest sample we have of rice comes from an archaeological site in Andarayan in the Cagayan Valley. In 1978, an intact grain was found on part of a broken piece of earthenware. A specialist at the Irri identified it as a type of Oryza, the same family of *Oryza sativa* more popularly known as Asian rice. More importantly, it was a type of rice that was in between cultivated and wild rice. The radiocarbon date was placed at 1290 B.C. In another site they found carbonized rice deposits in broken earthenware. Rice husk and stems were used by ancient Filipinos when they crafted their earthenware. The radiocarbon date for these other specimens, according to Bong Dizon of the National Museum, is placed at 1450 B.C. Now we know that rice was cultivated by the early Filipinos as early as the second millemium B.C., probably even earlier, except that the data to support this have not yet come to light.

Some of the artifacts found in late stone-age sites in Palawan are shell spoons formed from the curved part of the Chambered nautilus (*Nautilus pompilus*). The most famous of these spoons was found in the Duyong Cave. Whoever made the spoon, took the time to make what appear to be little hands on its sides and a face on the top of the spoon. While examining these shell spoons, the late Dr. Robert Fox was surprised that the Tagbanwa and Pala'wan people identified these as "rice scrapers." If there is some unbroken cultural connection between Fox's informants and the Neolithic people who used the Duyong Cave, then we have yet another piece of evidence on early rice and rice cultivation in the Philippines.

As a comfortable couch potato historian, I do not have the stamina to join an archaeological expedition. Neither am I trained to identify and date rice specimens in storage in the National Museum Archaeology division so I decided to search through books. Fernandez blazed the trail over 15 years ago by going over the entire "Vocabulario de la lengua Tagala," compiled and published as early as 1754 by the Augustinian friars Juan de Noceda and Pedro de San Lucar. In the late 1980s I found half a dozen copies of the 1860 edition in mint condition and covered with goatskin, two of these were purchased by Fernandez and no doubt used in her research that led to her landmark 1987 paper on food terms. I had other uses for the dictionary, however. I looked up all the "bad words" and wrote an article that no editor in Manila was willing to print. That's when I found Letty Magsanoc, or maybe how she found me. In 1999 while writing the Millennium Countdown, I scanned the dictionaries for gold and gold-working terms to illustrate a pre-colonial Golden Age.

Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera has brought to light many Tagalog proverbs, riddles and folk poetry from Noceda y San Lucar as well as 18th century friar grammars. More research can be done if we find more eccentric people willing to read ancient Tagalog grammars cover to cover. Erap can make good use of his prison time this way and enlarge his vocabulary.

(More on Wednesday)

* * *

Comments are welcome at ambeth@admu.edu.ph

Of milestones and millstones

HIGH BLOOD

Blanche D. Gallardo

WE'D also like to know the concerns of the sixtysomething and above, what makes their blood pressure rise or makes them sit back, content that all's well with their world and with themselves. —Ed.

MARCH was a month of many birthdays. One of my sisters, who lives in the States, celebrated her...what? 48-49th year?...early in the month; another sibling, my only brother, turned sixtysomething two days later. My daughter, a London resident, took a break from work mid-month to traipse around Los Angeles to mark her birthday. Likewise, two chums from university days added yet another candle each to their birthday cakes already groaning and grown smaller from the overload of years since we all came to the inevitable conclusion that life doesn't really begin at 40, but with the half-century and the golden time beyond.

What a bountiful harvest of fish!

Last Thursday, I took a taxi to Frisco (San Francisco del Monte) in Quezon City to visit my mother who is bedridden but is otherwise in good health (she will be either 91 or 92 late this month...old age has dimmed accurate memory of her correct age and she insists she's only 80! But who can argue with her expedient memory lapse?).

I spoke at length to the taxi driver about voting wisely in the coming elections. He confessed that he hadn't planned on voting, saying that it was a waste of time. I had to disabuse him of the notion, while explaining why Erap and his minions do not deserve to be voted into office. Hopefully, by the time we parted, I had at least convinced him to rethink his position on trashing his right to vote.

As we pulled up near the gate of my brother's home where my mother lives, her caregiver emerged to chase after the dog who ran out as she swung the gate open. Thinking to do me a good turn perhaps, for the conversation and handsome tip, the taxi driver called out to her... *"Nandito na ang lola mo!"*

Oops! I nearly fell out of the cab. Lola indeed! Something is very wrong somewhere! Not that I don't relish being a lola to our two grandchildren, aged 6 and 5, who have been carefully coached to pronounce lola, as you would do so in the song, "Whatever Lola wants, Lola gets." If our eldest daughter, who died in infancy had survived and married at the age of 20, I may well be grandmother to a teenager or young twentysomething! But lola to someone who must be pushing 30?

Getting home that evening, I took a long hard look at myself, conducting a critical and (I thought) honest assessment of my personal assets and liabilities. All of sixtysomething (ouch, again!) last August, relatively unlined of face (no deeply etched wrinkles, few visible fine lines), but much heavier than the lissome 87-lb of my wedding day some 42 years ago! Back in Hong Kong where we lived for more than 30 years, I used to blithely inform those who asked, that the secret of my youthful good looks was my being "too fat to wrinkle, too busy to age." Nothing like a casual remark by an unthinking bystander to demolish years of carefully nurtured self-image! I should have been more abstemious with the tip!

Anyway, the truth is, I've never felt so old as I do in Manila. Everywhere you turn in this city, one is overwhelmed by the swarm of young people. Where, oh where, do the older generation hang out? I don't see many of them on the streets and in public places. I only meet a substantial number when I attend our weekly prayer meetings and other community gatherings. Is this perhaps a realistic commentary on the prolific nature of our society?

There was a news item in one of the local papers sometime ago, reporting that our population is expanding faster than our national fish can multiply! I am pro-life, but I also believe in responsible parenthood. And it is clear from a cursory glance at depressed neighborhoods and squatter areas around town, that children from that segment of society are multiplying at a rate that negates any realistic prospects of a brighter future for these citizens of tomorrow.

Having said that, I must also admit that there is much to be said for larger families. Living in a developed society like Hong Kong made raising a small, nuclear family seem not only desirable, but practical. I only came to realize the pleasures and advantages of larger families since returning to Manila some four years ago.

Big families are a party unto themselves.

This is especially true at Christmastime when empty nests such as ours seem even emptier than usual (our son lives in Hong Kong with his family, and when in town, is mostly tied up with his in-laws; our daughter lives in London, and when in Manila divides her time between us and soaking up sun and surf with friends somewhere in Palawan or Boracay). Friends, including permanent *balikbayans* like us, are equally preoccupied with their families and are rarely free to join with us. How different it was in Hong Kong where at the proverbial "drop of a hat," never really needing an excuse to get together, we could celebrate, or join them in their celebrations, without feeling that we were intruding upon private family reunions.

The powerlessness of age comes prematurely upon me in Manila where I see myself on the outside looking in, watching events swirl around me and "movers" moving past without me. But then again, maybe this has less to do with age, than with being something of an alienated *balikbayan*, wallowing in a sense of betrayal and disenchanted over the perceived loss of innocence of our country.

In the '60s before we left for Hong Kong to join the first-ever regional publication in Asia, I remember being totally turned off by the sight of the Marcos couple singing at campaign rallies—convinced they were demeaning the exalted office of the presidency. Not only should they be held accountable for unleashing corruption on a massive scale in the highest office in the land, but for setting the trend for mindless entertainment at campaign rallies as an undesirable substitute for serious political discussion of issues. The blame for the debasement of Philippine politics rests squarely at Imelda's well-shod feet and Marcos' flawed brilliance. Today, we have politics, not of qualifications but of popularity, where name recall—not capability—is what gets a candidate elected into office.

A news item in one of the Manila dailies recently announced plans by Sen. Rodolfo Biazon to initiate legislation against the appointment of ex-military men with pending cases to the position of defense secretary. Why not extend the legislation to also cover the candidacy and/or appointment to public office of candidates with standing conviction or pending cases, to prevent even the remotest possibility of another Romeo Jalosjos being elected into office and serving his term from behind bars? Or, heaven forbid! the assumption to office by family members of disgraced and ousted leaders, like the spineless spouse of the deposed former President Estrada, who is running for the Senate, and the Marcos children Bongbong and Imee who make a mockery of People Power I?

Legislation that excludes individuals with criminal records, or pending criminal cases, would help preclude the possibility of getting them elected into positions of public trust. And while we're about it, cannot legislation also be passed—or if extant, be imposed—regarding minimum qualification for voters, including literacy and permanent address?

Still on the outside looking in, I can't help but wonder what happens to the tons of drugs confiscated by authorities and proudly paraded at frequent photo ops aired over national television? How are these disposed of? Are they burned, kept in some high security government storage facility, or do they promptly find their way back to the streets, courtesy of powerful officials or high-ranking military, or police officers?

Blanche D. Gallardo, 65, is a freelance journalist/editor.

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Church's dilemma: married priests or no priests

IT is good that the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines has spoken publicly about the shortage of priests in the Philippines. (PDI, 3/30/01) Acknowledgment of the shortage should force us all to think of a solution.

The shortage of priests worldwide is at a critical level. Half the parishes all over the world have no resident priest. Because of this shortage, bishops around the world are taking extreme measures. Parishes are being closed down. Two or three parishes are being merged with only one priest to serve them. Old priests are being asked not to retire. Priests in general are being overworked. Some bishops in England are preparing their parishioners in various parishes for a time when they will have no priests to serve them. The average age of priests in many countries is 65-70.

Bishops have been aware of this problem for many years. American Bishop Lucker said: "Celibacy is not a doctrinal issue, it is an issue of church rule that goes back to the 11th century. So it is changeable. It's not like a dogma that is a revealed teaching." And he added: "Many young people I talk to who would be excellent candidates for the priesthood tell me that they would love to be priests, but do not want to live alone for the rest of their lives." He noted that St. Peter, the first pope of Rome, was married, as were many apostles, bishops and priests in the early church. (Actually, 39 popes were married.)

Bishop Weakland has been advocating married priests for many years. Bishop Erwin Krautler of Brazil said that he is considering the possibility of ordaining "mature men" in the near future, even if they are married. The Bishops Conferences of Canada and Indonesia have repeatedly asked the Vatican for married priests. Cardinal Arns of Brazil said: "The world needs married priests desperately!"

Sometimes, when the possibility of optional celibacy (having celibate and married priests in the church) is discussed, people miss the forest for the trees. They debate about the holiness of the priest, about his need to be available at all times to the people, etc. What should be considered is why we need priests. We need priests to fulfill Christ's command to His church; in Matthew 28:19-20: "Go then to all peoples everywhere and make them My disciples: baptize them...and teach them..."

The mission of the Church is to serve the six billion people of the world. There are one billion Catholics in the world today. The Church will have to introduce many changes to reach them.

On Nov. 16, 1997, Bishop Reinhold Stecher, diocesan bishop of Innsbruck Tyrol, Austria, wrote a strong appeal to the Holy Father for optional celibacy. In his letter, Stecher said: "The tendency to value human ordinances and traditions higher than the divine mission, this is the most disturbing fact concerning some decisions of our Church at the end of this millennium. It seems that nobody in the highest echelon is getting upset when literally hundreds of Catholics cannot anymore have access to the morally necessary sacraments for salvation, forgiveness and the anointing of the sick.

"Do we think the Holy Spirit is delighted when we churchmen determine the size of the eye of the needle through which the Spirit is supposed to pull through the desired and much-needed vocations? Is there anything more idolatrous than imposing human will on the Holy Spirit or boxing the spirit into our narrow categories of thought?"—**EDWARD M. KELLY, P.O. Box 3037, Manila**

'Last Temptation,' 'Schindler's' never banned

LETTERS

THIS, refers to the letter of Melinda Quintos de Jesus and Luis Teodoro from the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility titled, "New law on film classification needed" published in the April 10 issue of the INQUIRER.

We wish to clarify certain portions of the letter, in particular the reference to the movies "The Last Temptation of Christ" and "Schindler's List." The former was not banned in the Philippines as alleged in the letter of De Jesus and Teodoro since the film's importation permit was never approved to begin with. The film also encountered rough sailing in other countries and was not shown in Muslim countries.

There was likewise no attempt to ban "Schindler's List" by the MTRCB then headed by Henrietta Mendez. The film was approved with two cuts and given an R-18 classification. The two cuts involved the following: shortening of the love-making of Oscar Schindler and his mistress, and removing the portion showing his mistress sleeping after the love-making with breast exposure and saliva dripping from her open mouth.

Other countries, like Malaysia, were not as fortunate since Steven Spielberg's film was banned on the ground that it "incites sympathy for one race."

We trust that the clarification has set the record straight not only for De Jesus and Teodoro, but for the readers of your newspaper and most especially the viewing public that we serve.—**DR. ALEJANDRO R. ROCES, chair, Movie and Television Review and Classification Board, Unit 3201, 33rd Floor, Atlanta Centre, 31 Annapolis Street, Greenhills, San Juan, Metro Manila**

Desperately hanging on to Quedancor post

ALLOW me to clarify some points in Neal H. Cruz's column last April 2, specifically the case of lawyer Elmer Garcia Mendoza who wants to return to his position as president and chief executive officer of the Quedan and Rural Credit Guarantee Corp. (Quedancor).

It is rather unfortunate that Mendoza omitted crucial facts in stating his case. He claims that he has security of tenure when in fact he holds a temporary appointment as president and CEO from the Civil Service Commission. While he passed the Managerial Aptitude Test Battery (MATB), he still has to hurdle three other stages before the Career Executive Service Board confers a CES eligibility on him. CESB executive director Normita Villanueva, in a certification dated March 20, 2001, attests that as of that date, Mendoza was not in the CESB's roster of CES Eligibles/Cesos.

Mendoza was considered serving the presidency of Quedancor in a holdover capacity pursuant to Memorandum Circular No. 1 issued by Executive Secretary Renato de Villa on Jan. 30, 2001. The circular clarifies that all heads of government agencies shall continue to serve in a holdover capacity until their successors have been qualified. The moment the Quedancor Governing Board approved the appointment of his successor, Nelson C. Buenaflor, Mendoza ceased to be president.

Mendoza has himself to blame for his predicament when he reneged on an agreement with the governing board during its Feb. 26, 2001 meeting. The board approved a compromise formula that Mendoza was to submit his resignation before he left for a scheduled trip to Korea. The board was to accept his resignation upon his return. The board in the same meeting decided to designate Buenaflor, the most senior career executive officer and next in rank, as officer-in charge in order to prevent a hiatus in the leadership of Quedancor.

Mendoza left for Korea without submitting his resignation letter. Instead, he broke the agreement by declaring that he was reassuming the position in a memorandum to all officers and employees. In a meeting, the board appointed Buenaflor as president and CEO. Mendoza was absent from the meeting although he had been given official notice about it. He later filed a petition for an injunction with a temporary restraining order.

Mendoza must really be desperate for he dragged the good name of my father into the controversy. Indeed, he went to see my father to seek his endorsement, but he left frustrated since my father does not interfere in the official affairs of the Department of Agriculture.

If Mendoza is honest enough, he should admit that he signed the P5-million check issued in favor of Erlinda Ferriols Ejercito to ingratiate himself with the ousted President and likewise confess that he also solicited the endorsement of the former President's brother-in-law, Raul de Guzman, to get his appointment as Quedancor president.

I therefore stand by the appointment of Buenaflor. I also categorically deny that I appointed Buenaflor as president, since I know that I am not authorized to do that under the Quedancor charter.—**LEONARDO Q. MONTEMAYOR, secretary, Department of Agriculture, Elliptical Road, Diliman, Quezon City**

Political billboard desecrating historical site

THIS is to call attention to Noli de Castro's huge lighted billboard, approximately 4-1/2 x 2-1/2 meters, announcing his candidacy for senator in the coming elections. It is prominently displayed at the back of the historical marker of the late President Jose P. Laurel on the national highway in Sto. Tomas, Batangas. It dwarfs the marker.

To our mind, the billboard desecrates the historical site and converts an otherwise hallowed ground into a marketplace for political propaganda, which is clearly adverse to the purpose for which the marker was built and enshrined.

The Philippine Historical Commission dedicated the place in honor of the late President Laurel whose tenure as public servant was untainted by graft, corruption or public scandal.

Out of respect for the memory of the late President Laurel, we call upon De Castro to immediately remove his billboard.—**REP. JOSE MACARIO LAUREL IV, Third District, Batangas**

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St. Luke's "Health Care"
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The WORLD

CORRUPTION ALLEGATIONS

Wahid: Impeachment will spur unrest

JAKARTA—Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid yesterday warned that a "nationwide rebellion" could erupt if the parliament attempts to impeach him over corruption allegations.

Wahid said 400,000 people from the main island of Java and the southern end of Sumatra were ready to come into the capital to protest against moves to oust him.

He also suggested that Indonesia's political crisis, which has spooked already depressed financial markets and raised fears of new civil unrest, could soon be over.

Wahid's latest remarks, in a speech to a conference of business leaders, analysts and diplomats, has heightened a war of words between the head of state and the legislature.

"You can see that it is a nationwide rebellion against the ways of the parliament, which is doing it's worst now," Wahid said.

"My supporters . . . are going to Jakarta," he said. "Yesterday the registration came to 400,000 from all over Java and from Lampung, Sumatra. This does not take into account the people from Jakarta."

On Feb. 1, the parliament overwhelmingly censured Wahid for his alleged involvement in two graft scandals.

On April 30, lawmakers, who also accuse Wahid of failing to fix Indonesia's many problems, are almost certain to issue a second censure against the president as a prelude to impeachment, probably by August.

Wahid has denied any wrongdoing and has vowed of stay in office until his tenure ends in 2004.

On Thursday, he accused hostile lawmakers of acting unconstitutionally and said the censures were illegal as the legislature could only remove him from office if he had committed treason.

"According to the Constitution the president has the right to govern to the end of his term," Wahid said.

He chided the parliament for acting "irresponsibly to the point that it tries to make the president fall down."

Downplaying the pressure against him, Wahid confidently predicted that the standoff with the legislature could be defused by a top-level meeting of political party leaders expected to be held before the end of the month.

"I can safely say . . . it's over," Wahid said. "The political crisis is . . . reaching the beginning of the end."

Even so, there are growing fears that the political crisis could trigger violence. *AP*

Palestinians continue mortar attacks

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip—Mortar shells rained down on Israeli villages inside and outside the Gaza Strip overnight, despite two short Israeli incursions into Palestinian-controlled areas, leaving Prime Minister Ariel Sharon open to criticism from many quarters within Israel.

Five mortar shells fired from inside Gaza late Wednesday landed near the collective farming village of Nir Am, just across the fence from Gaza, the military said. Two more mortar bombs fell at Kfar Darom, an isolated Jewish enclave in Gaza. There were no injuries.

Israeli tanks shelled a Palestinian police post in northern Gaza, Palestinians said, but it was not clear if this was retaliation for the mortar attacks.

Palestinians and Israeli forces exchanged heavy fire near Bethlehem in the West Bank, the military said, also reporting gunfire incidents in other parts of the West Bank.

Earlier, Israeli bulldozers guarded by a tank briefly entered Palestinian-controlled territory and knocked down a police post near the Palestinian town of Rafah in Gaza, following an Israeli pullout from a sliver of land at the other end of Gaza, taken after Palestinians fired mortar shells from there at Sderot, an Israeli town.

The Palestinians complained that Israel crossed a red line by systematically violating their jurisdiction in areas given them in past accords. Palestinian Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo said the Palestinians would respond with "popular resistance" to Israel's incursions.

With the violence continuing, Sharon absorbed criticism from settlers, who charged that he was not doing enough to stop it, from hardline politicians, who blamed him for ordering a pullout from the Gaza enclave because of US pressure, and from peace activists, who said that Sharon was thinking only in terms of force, not negotiations.

The US State Department denounced the takeover of about 2.5 sq. km. of Gaza territory across from Sderot, and soon the Israeli soldiers were on their way out, though their commander, Brig. Gen. Yair Naveh, had just said they might remain in place for months.

Sharon aides denied that pullout was the result of US pressure and said that the decision to withdraw had been made earlier, and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said the harsh State Department statement was the result of "a problem with communications."

Despite the official explanations, Sharon's moves appeared to many like vacillation.

Lawmaker Shaul Yahalom of the pro-settlement National Religious Party said, "Sharon is covering up an operational failure. Instead of admitting he withdrew under American pressure he shifts the blame to Naveh." *AP*

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Beijing agrees to EP-3 talks

BEIJING—Averting a collapse of talks over a spy plane collision, the top US negotiator yesterday said the Chinese agreed to discuss the return of the American aircraft held for three weeks.

The Americans had threatened to walk out after the first day, accusing the Chinese of taking an unproductive attitude. The US ambassador, retired Adm. Joseph Prueher, met with Chinese officials yesterday morning to urge serious negotiations on the EP-3E Aries II spy plane's return.

"Based on an understanding that we will be allowed to complete all of the items on the agenda for the meeting that we agreed upon earlier . . . we decided to go ahead and continue the meeting," Deputy Undersecretary of Defense Peter F. Verga, the top US negotiator, said.

Verga made the statement as he and the other seven US negotiators headed to the Foreign Ministry in Beijing for a second day of talks.

The United States says the $80-million spy plane's return is its main goal in the talks in Beijing. China has held the plane since it made an emergency landing April 1 on the South China Sea island of Hainan. The US crew was released only after 11 days of protracted negotiations. *AP*

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India, B'desh forces exchange fire on border

GAUHATI, India—Fighting between Indian and Bangladeshi forces over a disputed area along their border continued yesterday, one day after 18 soldiers were killed and a dozen civilians wounded in the conflict, officials said.

Local Indian officials said 2,000 villagers had been evacuated from the border area and were being sheltered in makeshift camps and schools and given some food.

"There have been reports of renewed firing on the border from early this morning. Paramilitary reinforcements have rushed to the area," Wati Ao, deputy police inspector general for India's Assam state, said by telephone.

Ao, who heads the police force in the western districts of India bordering Bangladesh, said there were no immediate reports of casualties on either side yesterday.

He said the fighting was reported on the border between Bangladesh and two Indian states, Assam and Meghalaya. He said yesterday's firing occurred near the western Assam town of Mankachar that borders northern Bangladesh's Kurigram district.

The conflict over several villages began Sunday, when about a dozen Bangladesh Rifles soldiers descended on Pyrdiwah, a tribal hamlet of 700 people. Bangladesh says India has occupied the town for 30 years.

Border disputes have occurred often over the years but such a large death toll is rare.

Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh spoke briefly in the upper house of Parliament, saying India intended to pursue good relations with Bangladesh. Opposition shouts about a defense purchase scandal that has troubled the government since last month forced adjournment and an end to Singh's remarks. The lower house, where Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee intended to speak on the Bangladesh dispute, also adjourned early, for the same reason.

On Wednesday, Indian troops crossed the frontier in the Kurigram district, 240 km north of Dhaka, and attacked two border posts, the chief of Bangladesh's border forces, Maj. Gen. Fazlur Rahman, said in Dhaka, Bangladesh's capital.

Indian mortar fire killed two Bangladeshi border guards, Rahman said. He said at least 15 Indian soldiers were killed by retaliatory gunfire and another was apparently killed by villagers. Indian officials confirmed the deaths of 16 Indian soldiers. *AP*

WORLDBRIEFS

China avoids censure over rights record

GENEVA—A US attempt to win international condemnation of China's human rights record failed on Wednesday when the UN rights watchdog passed a Chinese motion blocking consideration of the American proposal. But the UN Human Rights Commission did criticize Cuba for its human rights record and voted 50-1 to censure Israel for allowing Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories, with only the United States taking Israel's side. In a 23-17 vote, the 53-nation body decided not to consider a US resolution denouncing Beijing's for its repression of the Falun Gong spiritual movement, its "increased restrictions" on Tibetans and "harsh sentencing" of government opponents. *AP*

Drug firms withdraw case vs S. Africa

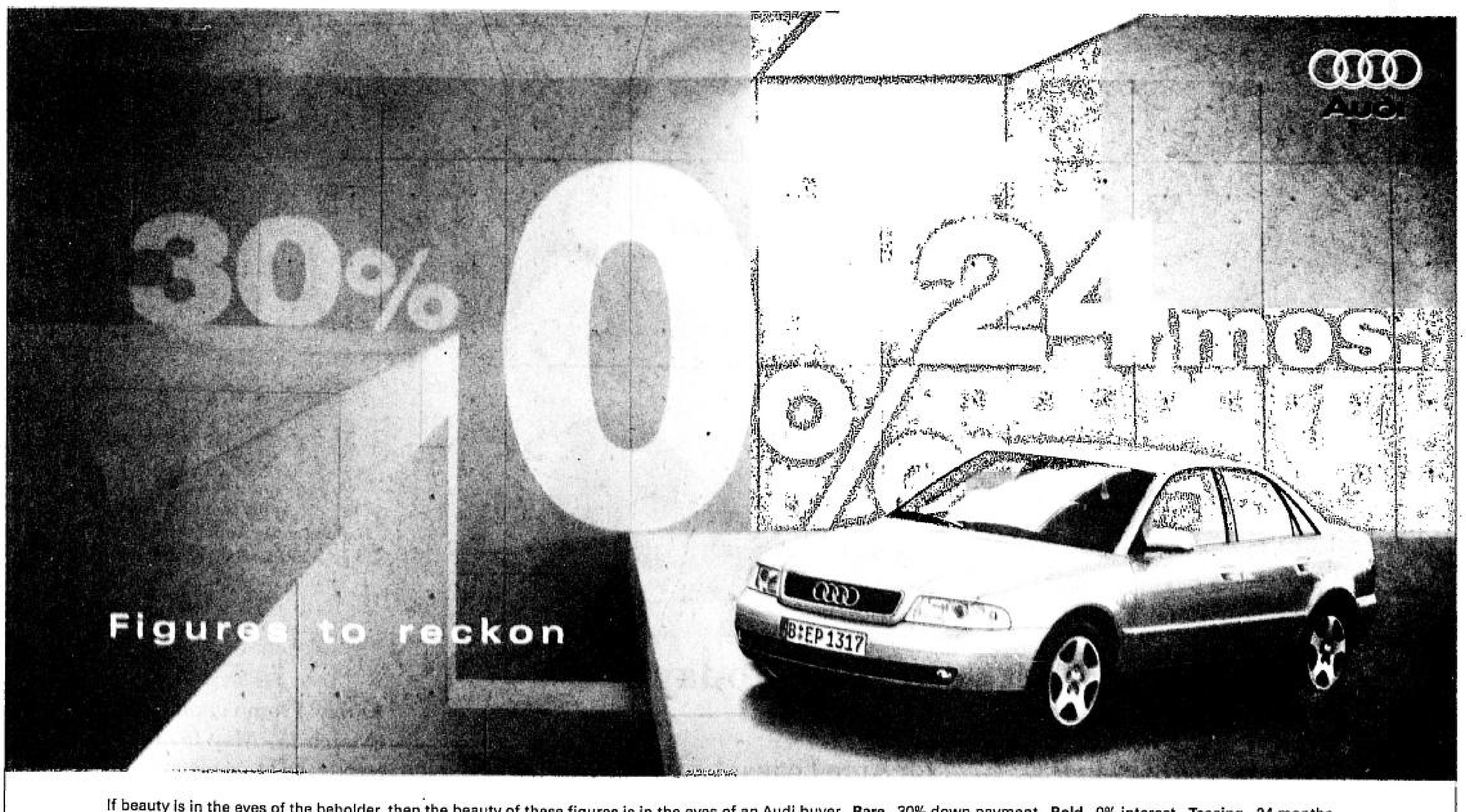
PRETORIA—Thirty-nine pharmaceutical companies withdrew their landmark case against the South African government over cheap AIDS drugs yesterday. Fanie Cilliers, a lawyer for the firms, told judge Bernard Ngoepe in the Pretoria High Court that the companies would pay the government's court costs. "There's a consent of all the parties to simply ask Your Lordship that the application has been withdrawn and the applicants have offered to pay the costs of the respondents," he said. *AFP*

Review of Malaysia laws urged

KUALA LUMPUR—Three separate statutes allowing authorities to detain people without trial are among many laws in Malaysia which infringe basic human rights and need to abolished or changed, the country's human rights commission said yesterday. In its first ever report to the government, the commission urged a sweeping review of Malaysia's laws and changes to those that flout international human rights conventions. It cited restrictive secrecy, press and freedom of assembly laws as potential offenders. In wide-ranging recommendations in its annual report, the commission also urged Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's government to be more open and accountable by opening its lawmaking process up to scrutiny. *AP*

Bush softens stance on global warming

WASHINGTON—The Bush administration has toned down its criticism of the 1997 Kyoto climate change treaty and is no longer insisting it is dead, Dutch Environmental Minister Jan Pronk said Wednesday. "I don't hear it anymore. I think it was a premature statement," said Pronk, chair of the United Nations' climate change negotiating panel, after meeting with administration officials. Bush sparked an international outcry last month by declaring the treaty unfeasible and reversing a campaign promise to treat carbon dioxide from power plants as a pollutant and source of global warming. He said the treaty's mandatory cuts on carbon dioxide emissions and short timetable are not acceptable to the United States and expressed concern about its impact on the economy. *AP*



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Burundi army foils coup try

BUJUMBURA—Burundi's Army put down a coup attempt on Wednesday, the defense minister said, after a group of young ethnic Tutsi soldiers seized control of the state radio and television station.

Defense Minister Cyrille Ndayirukiye said control was being restored in the capital after a junior Army officer claimed to have overthrown the government while President Pierre Buyoya was out of the country.

"The situation is increasingly under control. For the high command and members of the armed forces the message from the mutineers is null and void. The population is asked to remain calm," the minister said on several private radio stations.

The state radio and television station was still in control of the putschists but was surrounded by loyalist troops.

A military official said the mutineers were negotiating at the entrance of the station.

"The mutineers are not yet surrendering. They are in the process of negotiating," the official said.

Loyalist troops also surrounded the airport, where mutineers had earlier taken up positions.

The mutiny came as Buyoya, an ethnic Tutsi who himself seized power in a 1996 coup, was in Gabon holding talks with the leader of a main Hutu rebel movement. *AFP*

Across the NATION

TONY BERGONIA, Assistant Editor

ROUNDUP

New DECS program

LEGAZPI CITY—The National Educator's Academy of the Philippines has launched the High Order Thinking Skills (HOTS), a program of the Department of Education, Culture and Sports which aims to improve the thinking skills of students and develop their love for reading and literature. The program was conceived after studies revealed problems in critical thinking among students nationwide based on results of the National Assessment Tests.

Job Belen, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Vacation assistance

LEGAZPI CITY—The Land Transportation Office in Bicol is embarking on a "Summer Vacation Passengers' Assistance Program" to help students and Bicolanos working outside the region who are on vacation. LTO regional director Ramon Roco said teams composed of personnel from the LTO, Traffic Management Group and the Department of Health had been mobilized for the program. Roco said the mobile teams would be fielded along the Maharlika Highway from Tabugon, Sta. Elena town to Sorsogon.

Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Drug addicts arrested

NAGA CITY—Police arrested seven alleged drug pushers and users in separate buy-bust operations here. Among those charged before the regional trial court here were Raymond Lagrimas, 27 and Ariel Bongon, 21. Also arrested were Freddie Badiola, 31; Pablo Alarcon, 20 and Graciano Andaya, 36. Supt. Eliciar Bron, city police chief, attributed the arrests to the continuing police campaign against illegal drugs.

Juan Escandor Jr., PDI Southern Luzon Bureau

Police chief relieved

CAMP OLIVAS, Pampanga—Police authorities last week relieved the police chief of Dinalupihan following the April 8 escape of 10 inmates from the town's jail. Senior Supt. Perfecto Palad, Bataan police director, named Senior Insp. Rommel Velasco to replace Supt. Carlito Gonzalo, who is now being investigated for possible complicity. The inmates escaped after Carlito Almene, who was detained for illegal possession of firearms, cracked a concrete wall by using a screwdriver believed to have been sneaked in by a visitor, Palad said.

Tonette Orejas, PDI Central Luzon Desk

1 dies in collision

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—A dentist died on Maundy Thursday due to massive blood loss after his car collided with a van the night before at the Argonaut Highway here. Twelve others, including a 3-year-old boy and a 2-month-old baby, were hurt, police said. The fatality was identified as Dr. Wilfredo Opulento, 46, of West Bajac-Bajac in Olongapo City. Reports said the Mitsubishi L-300 van was approaching the main gate of the freeport when it overtook another vehicle and collided with the Nissan Sentra car driven by Opulento.

Elizabeth Marcelo, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Aetas hack cop

OLONGAPO CITY—A policeman was in critical condition after seven Aetas hacked him over a grudge on Maundy Thursday at the Iram resettlement in Barangay Cababalan here. Supt. Danilo Empedrad, city police director, identified the victim as SPO2 Joseph Felicitas of the Iram patrol base. Reports said Felicitas was patrolling the area about 8 p.m. Thursday when the suspects, armed with bolos and knives, appeared from a dimly lit corner and attacked him.

Elizabeth Marcelo, PDI Central Luzon Desk

Diving from bridges banned

ROXAS CITY—The city council has passed an ordinance banning the use of bridges by children diving into the river. Councilor Gilbert Gaurino-Tan, the sponsor of the measure, said the diving endangered the lives of the children and should be stopped. Children usually dive into the river from the Capiz Bridge, the city's main bridge.

Gerry Pagharion, PDI Visayas Bureau

WEATHER FORECAST

FORECAST: Extreme Northern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao will experience cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms. The rest of the country will be partly cloudy to cloudy with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms.

SOURCE: PAGASA

Metro Manila Hi 35° Lo 24°	Baguio Hi 27° Lo 17°	Tuguegarao Hi 32° Lo 23°	Laoag Hi 32° Lo 24°
Clark Zone Hi 34° Lo 24°	Tagaytay Hi 33° Lo 22°	Legazpi Hi 33° Lo 26°	Calapan Hi 34° Lo 24°
Bacolod Hi 33° Lo 23°	Roxas Hi 32° Lo 27°	Cebu Hi 32° Lo 24°	Tacloban Hi 33° Lo 25°
Gen. Santos Hi 32° Lo 24°	Zamboanga Hi 32° Lo 24°	Cagayan de Oro Hi 33° Lo 23°	Davao Hi 32° Lo 25°

Compiled by: Ray Leyesa, PDI Research

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Mayor, 3 cops gunned down

By Leoncio Balbin Jr.
PDI Northern Luzon Bureau

STA. LUCIA, Ilocos Sur—Suspected communist rebels gunned down a reelectionist mayor and three policemen while the mayor was delivering a speech during a fiesta in Barangay Namatican here Wednesday night, police said.

Mayor Teodoro Hernaez, 72, who was seeking a third term under the Bileg-Lakas-NUCD, was standing below the stage when the gunmen shot him point-blank, police said.

Hernaez was the second mayor to be killed in a pre-election violence. On Tuesday, Mayor Lope Asis of Baguyan, Agusan del Sur, was shot dead while campaigning.

Killed with Hernaez were his escorts, PO3 William Agpalo and PO2 Robert Naungayan, both of the Sta. Lucia police, and Rodolfo Hernaez, a retired policeman and cousin of the mayor.

"The killing was simultaneous and well-orchestrated," said Insp. Rene Licutan, Sta. Lucia police director.

Senior Supt. Wilmer Panabang of the regional police's community relations division in San Fernando City said the killings could be the work of communist New People's Army rebels operating in the towns of Salcedo, Sta. Lucia and Sta. Cruz.

Licutan said about 10 gunmen had spread out in the area and executed the killings simultaneously.

Hernaez and his three escorts died instantly.

The mayor had bullet wounds in the right cheek and chest, while his aides were shot in different parts of their bodies.

Police recovered 22 empty shells of .45 cal. and 9-mm pistols. An Armalite rifle issued to Naungayan was reported missing.

"This is a tragic incident," Dr. Ferdinand Hernaez, son of the slain mayor, said in Filipino. "I hope we get justice. I am praying that the assailants will be bothered by their conscience."

The young Hernaez said his father did not have enemies. He said he believed the slaying was politically motivated.

"Election day is nearing and my father was ahead of his rivals. I'm not saying the killing was totally politically motivated, but that is what I'm thinking now," he said.

The mayor's rival, incumbent Vice Mayor Romulo Gracia, denied involvement in the killing.

"I don't know anything about it," Gracia, a distant relative of the slain mayor, said in a radio interview.

Last year, a policeman and his son were killed by suspected NPA rebels in Candon City while the victims were taking a bath in their house.

Only recently, a tobacco flue curing facility, also in Candon, was sprayed with bullets allegedly by NPA tax collectors, Panabang said.

In La Union, less than a week after the killing of two armed political followers in Balaoan town, a driver of a mayoral candidate was shot and wounded early Thursday by two armed men believed to be goons of another politician.

Senior Supt. Florante Rea, Balaoan police chief, identified the victim as Paulino Doria, 51, driver of Casiano Ledda, who is running against reelectionist Mayor Joaquin Ostrea Jr. ***With reports from Gia Damaso-Dumo and Peter La. Julian, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau***

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2. For every roll of film (ANY BRAND) processed at participating FUJIFILM dealers/photo shops, a customer will get ONE (1) Triple Photo Panalo raffle coupon on which he/she must fill-in his/her NAME, ADDRESS, TELEPHONE/CONTACT NUMBER/S, SIGNATURE, OUTLET/ DEALER, SALESPERSON and drop it at its respective TRIPLE PHOTO PANALO Drop Box in participating FUJIFILM dealers/photo shops.
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C. Rules
1. Promo duration. This promotion will start on January 26, 2001 and will end on June 11, 2001.
2. The GRAND RAFFLE DRAW will be held on June 28, 2001 at Eat Bulaga noontime show, GMA-Channel 7 with the presence of DTI, YKL, and Jimenez D'Arcy representatives.
3. Last day of submission of entries will be on June 11, 2001.
4. 106 winners (6 grand prizes and 100 consolation prizes).
5. Allocation of Prizes:
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      Thirty-three (33) winners of Fujifilm Instax 100 cameras & film
      (16-for NCR & REGION 4 and 17-for ALL OTHER REGIONS).
   b. Photofinishing/Developing Category:
      Two (2) winners of Ford Ranger XLT 4x2
      (1-for NCR & REGION 4 and 1-for ALL OTHER REGIONS)
      Thirty-three (33) winners of Fujifilm Instax 100 cameras & film
      (16-for NCR & REGION 4 and 17-for ALL OTHER REGIONS).
   c. Camera Category:
      Two (2) winners of SpeedFight 2 Peugeot 50cc Motorcycle
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      Thirty-four (34) winners of Fujifilm Instax 100 cameras & film
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6. A winner can only win once. If a name is drawn more than once, he/she gets the bigger prize in all categories. Prizes are not convertible to cash.
7. Winners shall be asked to present their claim stub portion of the raffle coupon (for photofinishing and camera category) and any of the following identification papers (School/company ID, driver's license, any ID with picture).
8. Employees of YKL, Jimenez D'Arcy and participating FUJIFILM dealers/photo shops and their representatives, including relatives up to second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining the promo.
9. Winners will be announced via print ads and will be notified by registered mail as to where he/she can claim the prize. Prizes can be claimed within 60 days from receipt of notification. Winners of Fujifilm Instax 100 Cameras can claim their prize at corresponding YKL owned store specified in the registered mail. Winners of Ford F-150 Lariat A/T 2000, Ford Ranger XLT 4x2 and Speed Fight 2 Peugeot 50cc Motorcycle can be claimed from Mr. Sonny Teves at YKL head office at 24 Sto. Domingo Road, Quezon City. Prizes not claimed within the given period will be forfeited in favor of YKL with prior approval of DTI.
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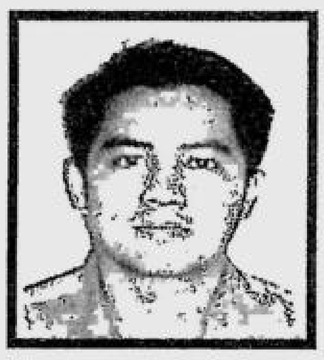
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3 FLORDELIZA FUSILERO
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5 LUISA ENCARNACION CORDERO
6 ANITA CUEVAS
7 ELPIDIO DALISAY
8 EDMUNDO RODRIGUEZ
9 ELVERA GUILALAS
10 TESSIE SIOBAL
11 MA. THERESA CONSULAR
12 JACKELINE CAYABYAB
13 ANNABELLE BERNAL
14 JULIE ANN DELA CRUZ
15 CARIDAD BACHILLER
16 CRISPIN POCAIS
17 EMFE HERRERO
18 ILLUMINADA ISICAN
19 AGUSTINA MILO
29 MARILYN BANGKIL
21 KRISTOPHER ARAOS
22 JENELYN CHAN
23 JOZALDIE JUNTO
24 JANSEN BLANCO
25 RENE TUDLA SR.

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1 JESUSA ARAOS
2 VILMA ANDAYA
3 PERLITA MACOB
4 EVELYN BAYTAN
5 MERLINA YBANEZ
6 MARIANO CHAN
7 ROWENA GAYO
8 CLAVER BELEN
9 MERLITA CHAN
10 LUZVIMINDA PULICAY

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1 SALVIMAE MONCADA
2 ROLANDA ESTRELLA
3 MARCELO REROZ, JR.

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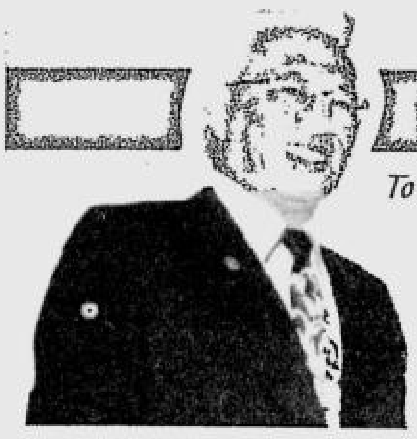
HATAW SA RECRUITMENT

HATAW SA TRAINING



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

To my business partners in Platinum Plans,

Another year, another milestone.

The year 2000 saw the country surviving major difficulties in the socio-political and economic spheres. The effects on most companies were substantial. A lot of them closed, some laid-off their employees, while some of them simply just "survived."

In the midst of these problems, Platinum Plans stood high and mighty. In fact, many of our sales associates hit record highs in their production. These "warriors," strong and unyielding, were at the forefront of our sales expansion-determined in their efforts to achieve and maintain pre-need superiority. They deserve our adulation.

The year 2001 will have even more challenges. But I am certain that our sales associates, with utmost zeal and commitment, will set up new and higher goals for themselves. They will redefine the standard in sales productivity and in the process set more milestones for others to emulate. These they do, the Platinum Plans way.

As your business partner, the company shall continue to provide quality services that will equal your exemplary performance. We will be tireless in our effort to create a work ethic that is efficient and dedicated to make your partnership with us very harmonious and of course-profitable.

Congratulations to all our winners. Keep up the good work and may God bless you always.

Ernesto L. Salas
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Local power play confuses PPC senatorial candidates

By Alex Pal
PDI Visayas Bureau

DUMAGUETE CITY—Power play on the local fronts of the People Power Coalition (PPC) has stirred confusion among the senatorial candidates who came here on Wednesday to campaign in Negros Oriental.

The supposed appearance of the candidates was upstaged here by former Rep. Miguel Romero, an ally of deposed President Joseph Estrada who proclaimed his protégés as the PPC guest candidates.

Romero, who is seeking to reclaim his congressional seat in the second district, introduced all the candidates of the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino and the PPC from the towns and cities in the district in a breakfast forum with all the PPC senatorial candidates.

The senatorial candidates had earlier been briefed by Vice Gov. Edgar Teves, PPC provincial chair, that the coalition had guest candidates in the second district because of an alliance entered into by the Lakas-NUCD with the LDP and the Liberal Party before People Power II was mounted against Estrada.

Romero's guest candidacy in the PPC does not sit well with the camp of Bais City Mayor Francisco Villanueva, the official PPC candidate for representative in the second district. Villanueva was not in the Dumaguete rally.

Board member Jose Baldado, PPC vice gubernatorial candidate, walked out of the forum while Romero was introducing the local candidates.

Romero has his own vice gubernatorial candidate, Melimore Saycon, whom he is endorsing in the second district.

Romero said these were just realities in politics, but not a few PPC senatorial candidates were surprised.

"This is the first time I am seeing all of these and I could not figure out what is really happening," said Sen. Franklin Drilon.

Sen. Juan Flavier also found the situation confusing. "This is something I do not understand. There must be some dynamics that only you people here understand and know."

In Bais, the rally and proclamation of Mayor Villanueva hit a snag as he wanted the PPC to endorse his own lineup for the city, on top of the endorsement given a few hours ago to Hector "Tata" Villanueva, the PPC mayoral candidate.

The rally was delayed by almost an hour as Villanueva and PPC leaders worked out a compromise.

As a result, Villanueva was proclaimed PPC congressional candidate inside his office and no more proclamations were made when the senatorial candidates faced about 1,000 people at the Bais Quadrangle.

Former Press Secretary Hector "Chito" Villanueva explained that the PPC had a policy of taking care only of the senatorial and the congressional candidates.

"The local political leaders in the party can decide on their own at the local level to coalesce with anybody they like," he said.

On Monday, candidates also carrying the PPC banner in Dumaguete broke away from the pro-administration group after they learned that they would not be getting the coalition's official endorsement.

Mayoral candidate Joel Obar said the PPC "betrayed the spirit of Edsa II and the masses" and vowed not to support the PPC senatorial candidates, except for Sen. Ramon Magsaysay Jr.

Bet shot dead in Camarines

NAGA CITY—A candidate for a seat in the provincial board of Camarines Norte was shot dead by two suspected New People's Army rebels after a campaign sortie yesterday in Sitio Napalungan, Barangay Nakalaya, Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte.

A report reaching Chief Supt. Roberto Delfin, Bicol police chief, identified the victim as Jose "Bong" Bulalacao, who was running under the Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino-Aksyon Demokratiko.

The report said Bulalacao was about to board his motorcycle when the assailants, who were armed with .45 cal. pistols, shot him.

He died on the spot with bullet wounds in the right temple and other parts of his body.

Jun Zabala, LDP provincial campaign manager, said in a telephone interview that Bulalacao, 56, of Jose Panganiban, was the town's former deputy police chief and provincial warden of Camarines Norte during the term of then Gov. Roy Padilla Jr.

Zabala said Bulalacao told his companions that he would just ride his motorcycle in going back to the town proper of Jose Panganiban.

"When he failed to follow, Bulalacao's companions who were aboard the L-300 van went back to check and found him sprawled beside his motorcycle," Zabala said. *Juan Escandor Jr. and Rey Nasol, PDI Southern Luzon Bureau*

Supreme Court fines 2 judges

BAGUIO CITY—The Supreme Court imposed fines on two municipal trial court judges in Sultan Kudarat and Camarines Sur for ignorance of the law in separate decisions here on Monday.

Judge Osmundo Villanueva of the fourth municipal circuit trial court of Bagumbayan and Esperanza towns in Sultan Kudarat was found by the tribunal's second division to have acted as counsel of a complainant and her father-in-law in a case filed in his sala.

Villanueva was fined P20,000.

The court said the judge compromised his neutrality and independence when he acted as counsel for the complainant.

The first division ordered MTC Judge Eddie Monsearte in Magarao and Canaman towns in Camarines Sur to pay P5,000.

It said Monsearte issued a warrant of arrest against one Jovenal Oporto Jr., although the criminal complaint against him was not made under oath. Oporto was accused of falsification of public records.

Monsearte referred the case to the provincial prosecutor of Camarines Sur on the mistaken opinion that the crime charged fell within the jurisdiction of the regional trial court.

"Had Judge Monsearte endeavored to exert a little more effort to read the criminal complaint, he would not have conducted a preliminary investigation since the charge falls squarely within the jurisdiction of the court," the high court said. *Frank Cimatu, PDI Northern Luzon Bureau*

RAM leader named customs collector

BIBIT

SUBIC BAY FREEPORT—Former Col. Billy Bibit, a leader of the Rebolusyonaryong Alyansang Makabayan, is the new district collector of the Bureau of Customs in this freeport.

He is formerly operations chief of the Customs Intelligence and Investigation Service, the agency that goes after smuggling syndicates.

"No matter what it takes, I will (make good) my commitment to President Macapagal-Arroyo to neutralize smuggling," Bibit said.

He said he could not let the President down, recalling her statement after he was appointed last month that "maybe this time, we would get the big-time smugglers."

A number of alleged big-time smugglers were dubbed "untouchables" during the previous administration, reportedly because they were close friends and drinking buddies of ousted President Joseph Estrada.

"One of them is still here," Bibit said, citing a Chinese-Filipino engaged in the retail business that is allegedly used as a front for his smuggling operations. He did not identify the suspected smuggler.

Elizabeth Marcelo, PDI Central Luzon Desk

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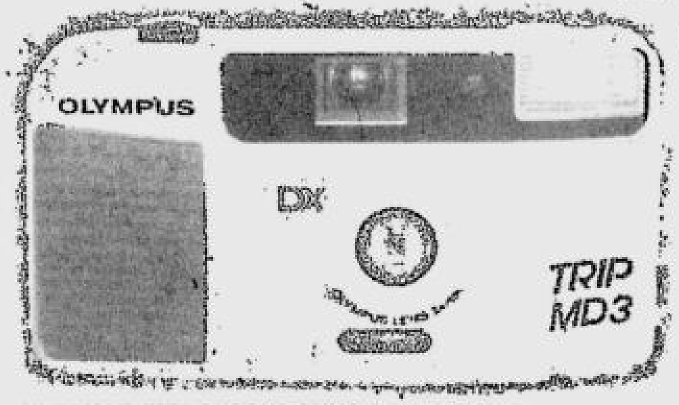
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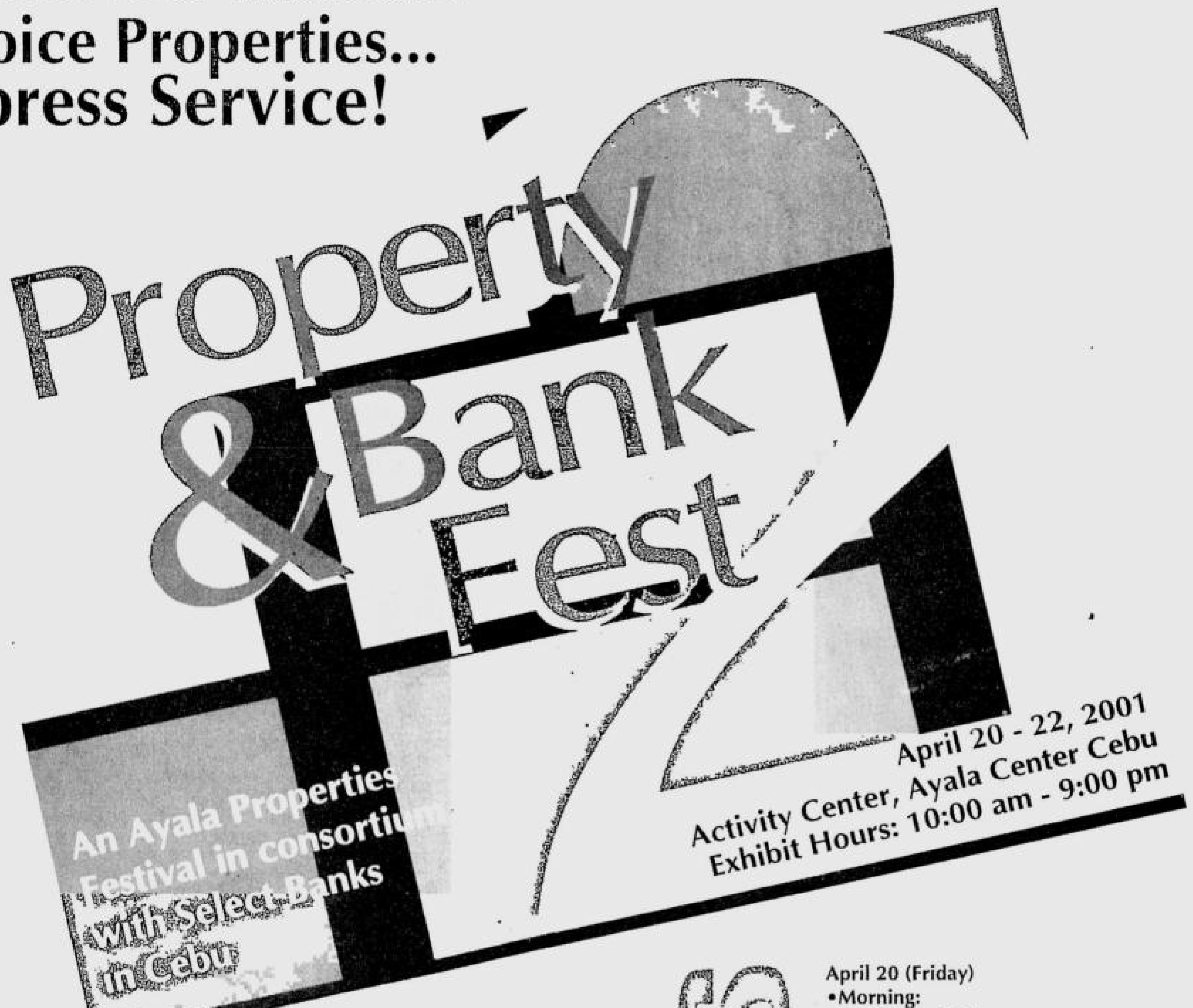

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An Ayala Properties Festival in consortium with Select Banks in Cebu

April 20 - 22, 2001
Activity Center, Ayala Center Cebu
Exhibit Hours: 10:00 am - 9:00 pm

EVENTS

April 20 (Friday)
- Morning:
  - Ribbon Cutting
  - Opening of Exhibit
- Afternoon:
  - Motorcade
  - Property & Financing Forum
  - Raffle Draw

April 21 (Saturday)
- Afternoon:
  - Bank Presentations
  - Interior Design Presentation
  - Furniture Showcase
  - Bank Presentations
  - Landscaping Lecture & Presentation
  - Landscaping Showcase
  - Raffle Draw

April 22 (Sunday)
- Afternoon:
  - Food Presentation Lecture & Demo
  - Bank Presentations
  - Table Setting Demo
  - Bank Presentations
  - Raffle Draw

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—it's making the years count.
Wolfman Jack Smith

Love Month

"Love To Last A Lifetime"

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And this is the kind of love that motivates these Sun Life Financial agents—our Love Month 2001 winners—to share the miracle of life insurance with as many people as possible.

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Letty L. Lacson
Cedar NBO

Top Agents in NSC

Susie Guzman
Eucalyptus NBO

Angelina C. Lim**
Chestnut NBO

Top NBMs in SPI Points

Visitacion Lilia C. Chang
Osmanthus NBO

Corazon S. De Mesa
Mulawin NBO

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Cedar NBO

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Cedar NBO

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Tindalo NBO

Evelyn D. Sy
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Rosemarie L. Pabalan
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Mulawin NBO

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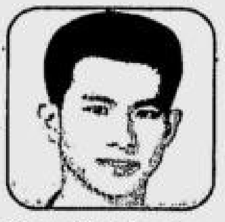
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Joy, sorrow on Erap's birthday

(From page A1)

But others, like Josephine Pakulan, showed up not only to demonstrate loyalty to Estrada but also to await a reward just for being there.

Pakulan, 51, told the INQUIRER that she was also marking her birthday yesterday.

"Can you please tell him that? Tell him that my husband has just died and our house needs repair. I need money to buy new lumber," she said.

Estrada later led the distribution of gifts to residents at the village stadium. Afterward, he shared a lunch of eggplant, shrimps and steamed rice with select members of the community, all of them eating with bare hands.

"If it's true that I illegally pocketed billions of pesos, then I could have easily fled with the money and left all of you here," he told the residents at the stadium.

In response, they chanted: "Erap pa rin! Erap pa rin!"

'It's like justice'

During the Mass, one of three officiating priests tried to draw parallels between the day's biblical readings on Christ's resurrection and Estrada's legal battles.

Fr. Larry Faraon started off by recounting that Christ's apostles doubted at first that He had actually risen from the dead, and that they were finally convinced after taking a good look at Him, touching His wounds, and then sharing a meal with Him.

"It's like justice. At times you really have to take a good look at it, then feel it, and finally ask yourself if you can swallow it," Faraon said.

"And in our time, so many versions of truth and justice are coming out. That's why let us pray that our birthday celebrant will get only true justice," he said.

ROGER MARGALLO

BIRTHDAY boy gets to kiss his beloved mother, Mary Ejercito.

Fr. Sonny Ramirez opened the Mass by appealing to those present to "ask God to grant him (Estrada) His guiding light when he makes decisions in the next few days."

Estrada shared a pew with former first lady Luisa Ejercito, his daughter Jackie and her husband Beaver Lopez, Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago and Jamby Madrigal.

Ejercito, Santiago and Madrigal are senatorial candidates of the Estrada-backed Puwersa ng Masa-Laban ng Demokratikong Pilipino.

Also spotted by the INQUIRER were Estrada's sons Jinggoy (by the former first lady) and JV (by ex-starlet Guia Gomez). The half-brothers shared a pew with two of Estrada's other children—an adolescent boy and a teenage girl (by ex-starlet Laarni Enriquez).

An advance party who waited for Estrada's arrival in Taytay was composed of Ronaldo Zamora, his former executive secretary; Narciso Santiago Jr., his former interior undersecretary and the senator's husband; Rizal Gov. Casimiro Ynarez; and Rizal Rep. Gilberto Duavit.

Jinggoy Estrada claimed that despite his father's disgraceful fall from power. "the (birthday) crowd seems to have gotten bigger and more enthusiastic even."

But in a candid moment, Santiago Jr. noted that "*kami na lang yata ang natitira* (it seems we're all that's left of Estrada's supporters) "

He declined to name who were conspicuous by their absence

CHILDREN of Estrada all in a row at San Lorenzo Ruiz, Taytay, Rizal, from left: San Juan Mayor Jinggoy Estrada; JV Ejercito; and Estrada's three children by Laarni Enriquez.

EDWIN BACASMAS

Back at the ranch

At the Buchanan Avenue gate of North Greenhills in San Juan, Estrada's supporters had chicken and pork *adobo* packed with rice in plastic bags for lunch. Bottled water was distributed.

Emman Allera, one of 500 demonstrators who have been camping out at the gate for a week now, said what made him and his colleagues different from President Macapagal-Arroyo was the fact that they were "a lot more sincere" in their birthday greetings for Estrada.

Ms Macapagal had earlier said she wished peace for her predecessor on his birthday.

For the first time, Estrada acknowledged the demonstrators who had taken upon themselves the task of "securing" him from arrest.

He reportedly visited them at about 1 a.m. yesterday to thank them for ignoring what he said were fabricated stories being told about him.

The demonstrators were earlier treated to two relatively new movies starring Estrada's close friend, Fernando Poe Jr.

"Things have been very difficult for him lately. We can see how much he has to bear. That's why I wish him more calm and strength," Allera said in Filipino.

Asked what his birthday wish was for Estrada, Leonardo Chavez, 80, said a prayer: "Almighty God, may You always keep our president healthy and safe. As you are our Messiah in heaven, he is our only savior on earth."

Chavez, a self-proclaimed "die-hard fan" of Estrada, said he did not mind if his "savior" no longer had the full powers of a president to get him out of poverty.

He said he found it a pleasure to be given a chance to help his idol in his own way.

Felipe Bacolod, 54, a resident in a squatter community in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, aired a similar sentiment.

"I know in my heart that he is a good person. He could not have possibly done any of the things he is being accused of," Bacolod said.

He said the charges against Estrada were "just a ploy of envious powergrabbers to destroy" the ex-president.

"But what they don't know is that this smear campaign only makes people love Erap more," he added.

Allera said his respect for Estrada was so great that he had a picture of his idol framed in a shop. He said he could not bring it home just yet as he had yet to pay the full fee of P1,800.

"I'm planning to hang it on the wall in my sala so that my visitors will always see it," he said.

Allera is also a Marcos loyalist. He boasted of having stolen silver spoons and a video tape of the late Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr.'s assassination from Malacañang during the 1986 People Power revolt.

PPC 'gifts'

In Silay City, Negros Occidental, People Power Coalition senatorial candidates said a fair trial, a copy of the Holy Bible and a copy of the book "Trust" by Francis Fukuyama were the "gifts" they wanted to give Estrada on his birthday.

"The best gift we can give Estrada is a fair trial so he will have a chance to prove his innocence," said Joker Arroyo, adding that this was precisely what Estrada denied the Filipino people at his impeachment trial.

Estrada is facing a string of criminal charges before the Sandiganbayan, among them the non-bailable crime of plunder.

Ramon Magsaysay Jr said he wanted to give Estrada a copy of the Bible "so he can go back to Morality 101 and Conscience 101," a copy of Fukuyama's book so he would "start telling the truth."

The other PPC candidates also had their own birthday wish for Estrada:

- "For him to tell the nation the truth . . . so that the nation's wounds will heal"—Franklin Drilon.
- "For all of us to have the truth in the cases filed against him"—Francisco Pangilinan.
- "For him to realize his mistakes and repent"—Ernesto Herrera.
- "For him to have peace of mind"—Ralph Recto.
- "For him to fulfill his promise to the poor"—Liwayway Vinzons Chato.

With reports from Agnes E. Donato in Manila; Carla P. Gomez and Romy G. Amarado, PDI Visayas Bureau

Erap escort crushed to death by truck

By Philip C. Tubeza

ONE of Joseph Estrada's motorcycle-riding escorts was crushed to death at around 3 p.m. yesterday by a 10-wheel truck while the disgraced president was on his way to Payatas, Quezon City.

According to investigator Marcelo Sabado of the Central Police District's Traffic Sector III, SP01 Normal Resol died instantly after a Fuso truck (with Plate No. URS-117) rammed his motorcycle and pinned him to a concrete wall in Libis, Quezon City.

Resol was a member of the Presidential Security Group motoring unit.

Driver Sonny Dagpin, 27, of Barangay Santa Quiteria, Caloocan City, surrendered voluntarily and told investigators that his truck had lost its brakes.

Estrada's convoy had just come from Taytay, Rizal, at the time of the accident.

Resol was on his motorcycle and directing traffic along Boni Serrano to clear the way for Estrada's convoy when the truck came at him.

"We were not informed that the former president was going to pass that way. The traffic there was heavy at that time," Sabado said.

Estrada allegedly got out of his car to see what happened. He left some of his men to take care of Resol.

Dagpin is detained at CPD's Sector III. Police are preparing charges of reckless imprudence resulting in homicide, Sabado said.

At his last birthday stop yesterday, Estrada joined his mother Mary Ejercito at the Asociacion de Damas Filipinas Settlement House in Manila.

He arrived at around 6:30 p.m. accompanied by his son Jinggoy and his sister Pilarica.

He spent 30 minutes at the orphanage while its residents partook of his birthday blowout—spaghetti, chicken and soft drinks.

Some 150 people from nearby who came with young children were not allowed inside the compound after Estrada arrived on board his green Chevrolet van.

Some of his supporters barred the media from entering, forcing photographers to climb the gate.

People who had waited for Estrada for more than two hours did not get a glimpse of their idol.

Estrada ordered the reconstruction of the settlement house after it was destroyed in a deadly fire two years ago. *With a report from Dona Pazzibugan*

Sandiganbayan chief scolds . . .

(From page A1)

"They (the public) are not graduates of law . . . The public is not ordained by jurisprudence to justify the withdrawal of information," he said.

According to Section 2 of Republic Act 7080, a public officer is guilty of plunder if, by himself or in connivance with members of his family, relatives by affinity or consanguinity, business associates, subordinates or other persons, he amasses, accumulates or acquires ill-gotten wealth through a combination or series of overt or criminal acts as described in (Section 1 of the same law) in the aggregate amount of at least P75 million.

The Office of the Ombudsman had filed 11 criminal cases against Estrada and several others. But it filed only one plunder case based on the same allegations.

It said these formed a series of acts although it later decided to withdraw five of the cases, one of which was lodged before the Sandigan's first division under Garchitorena.

Ombudsman Aniano Desierto had earlier tried to justify the move to withdraw the cases by saying it would focus government prosecutors' efforts on pursuing the plunder case.

This was the same line adopted by the prosecutors yesterday. They read Desierto's press statement, adding that the five cases involved "lesser" charges.

This remark prompted the court to remind them that jailing a man for several years could not be defined as a "lesser" charge.

Amended complaint

Also yesterday, the Office of the Ombudsman filed with the Sandigan a six-page amended complaint for plunder against Estrada, claiming it was a near-perfect complaint in form and in substance.

Desierto said the filing of the amended complaint left the Sandigan no other option but to immediately issue a warrant for the arrest of Estrada and his supposed co-conspirators—Jinggoy Estrada, Charlie "Atong" Ang, Edward Serapio, Yolanda Ricaforte, Alma Alfaro, Eleuterio Tan and Delia Rajas.

The amended complaint did not include any new accused but explicitly described Estrada as a former president.

The word "president" was inadvertently omitted after the word "former" in the charge sheet.

Thus, the original charge sheet named "former Joseph Estrada" alias Asiong Salonga and Jose Velarde as the main respondent in the non-bailable offense of plunder.

Desierto maintained that the omission was not intentional. "There was clerical inadvertence in the form because of the missing word 'president.' But in the body (of the complaint) the word is there," he said.

Desierto said the omission would not actually render the complaint or information for plunder defective because the allegations or the body of the complaint explicitly referred to Estrada as a former president.

"But just the same, we corrected it to leave no room for any legal technicalities," he said.

Aside from that correction, the amended complaint spelled out "specific amounts, not just the total amount . . . and the sources of the ill-gotten wealth, not just the general source," he said.

The new complaint now stipulates—in figures and in words—the P545 million allegedly received by Estrada from "jueteng" lords.

"In the old complaint, we said the money came from illegal gambling. Now we categorically state that it came from jueteng 'in the form of gift, share, percentage, kickback or any form of pecuniary benefit,'" Desierto said.

Desierto appeared unperturbed by the threat of Estrada's lawyers to seek his impeachment, saying: "Estrada's troubles will not end with the Ombudsman being impeached."

He said the Office of the Ombudsman would not stop until Estrada is punished for "sins to the Filipino people."

"If I'm removed, somebody takes over anyway. There will be many others—more competent and dedicated than me—who will take over my office. They will see to it that he gets jailed," Desierto said.

Defense

The government team tried to defend their motion to withdraw by saying that the case was merely a "duplication," that the allegations were included in the plunder case, that the case was "lesser," and that they felt that the court should not interfere with their "strategy."

Tamayo also told the court that since it had not yet issued a warrant for arrest, the case could not be considered within its jurisdiction.

But to these arguments, the court pointed out that a Supreme Court decision—Crespo vs. Mogul—gives the court jurisdiction over the case.

To this, Tamayo replied: "What we are saying, your honor, is that this court has not acquired jurisdiction of the accused because it has not issued warrants of arrest…"

Garchitorena informed the prosecutors that Estrada had already posted bail for six of the cases, and that with that act, he could be considered as having submitted himself to the jurisdiction of the court.

"That is why the lawyers of the accused are here," Garchitorena said.

Surprisingly, Tamayo said: "We did not know that, your honor."

"You did not know that?" Garchitorena said.

"We did not consider that—the bail—at this point, your honor.. " Tamayo replied.

At the tail-end of the hearing, the prosecutors asked for a 30-minute break to review their position. Reporters took this as a cue to file out of the court—even without a declared suspension of proceedings—to conduct interviews.

At the end of the break, the reporters were surprised to learn that they had been barred from re-entering the courtroom as their exit had supposedly disrupted the proceedings.

When the hearing resumed, the court directed the prosecutors to file a written memorandum for the withdrawal of the case. The defense was given another five days to reply.

The court set the next hearing for May 7.

The second set of prosecutors handling the second case sought to be withdrawn—this one involving jueteng collections and filed before the third division composed of Justices Anacleto Badoy, Teresita Leonardo-de Castro and Ricardo Ilarde—was also given five days to bolster their arguments.

Forfeiture cases

No rest is in sight for Estrada.

After the May 14 elections, President Macapagal-Arroyo's administration plans to file forfeiture cases against him involving his alleged "ill-gotten" assets, including his supposed mansions.

Solicitor General Simeon Marcelo said Wednesday night that the procedure would be "simple" as the government would use as basis Estrada's statement of assets and liabilities, wherein he declared only P35 million in assets.

Marcelo also said private prosecutors planned to include Estrada's wife, former first lady Luisa Ejercito, as "co-conspirator" in the plunder case that was originally filed against the ex-president. *With a report from Donna S. Cueto*

Wahid offers Salamat . . .

(From page A1)

between the Philippine government and the separatist MILF, with his country as the venue for the peace talks.

"I have set aside Pantar Barat, an island in the bay of Jakarta, to become the place for Salamat Hashim to live, if he chooses to go away from the Philippines," Wahid said in a speech at a conference of business leaders, analysts and diplomats.

He said he already told "friends in Mindanao that they can use Indonesia to talk, to negotiate."

"There was an announcement by the government in the Philippines that they would like to have a third party, Indonesia, as a mediator for negotiations. Well of course, they are welcome here, they can choose any city for that," he said.

MILF spokesperson Eid Kabalu noted that Salamat and Wahid had been college friends at the Azhar University in Cairo in the 1960s.

Manado

Wahid said "they could use Manado for that and I would be very glad to preside at the opening of those negotiations."

Manado is a city on the Indonesian island of Sulawesi, near Mindanao, which was used in the past as a venue for meetings between Philippine and Indonesian leaders.

In Manila, Jesus Dureza, chair of the Philippine government panel in talks with the MILF, said he was unaware of Wahid's offer.

President Macapagal-Arroyo said on April 12 that the talks could rotate between the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia.

MILF leaders met with a senior aide of Ms Macapagal in Malaysia last month and agreed to resume peace talks.

Ms Macapagal's deposed predecessor, Joseph Estrada, abandoned peace talks last year and adopted a hard-line military policy against the 12,500-member MILF.

The MILF has been waging a 23-year rebellion for the establishment of an independent Islamic state in Mindanao.

MILF welcomes offer

The MILF welcomed Wahid's offer. Kabalu said his group was "very open to that offer," noting that Indonesia was an influential member of the Organization of Islamic Conference (OIC).

"They will be able to help a lot in the peaceful resolution of the problem in Mindanao," Kabalu said.

Indonesia led efforts by the OIC to help broker a 1996 peace accord between Manila and the larger Moro National Liberation Front (MNLF), which renounced separatist rebellion and settled for limited Muslim self-rule in four provinces in Mindanao.

The MILF broke away from the MNLF in 1978 and was not included in the accord.

Wahid, who is facing increasing pressure at home to quit the presidency, said his offer of brokering and hosting the talks had already been made during a meeting with "an emissary from the commander of the MILF," who briefed him on a peace meeting in Kuala Lumpur in March.

But he made no mention in the speech of having already made the offer to the Philippine government.

Good neighbor policy

"That is the situation in essence, so while we have domestic problems that we would like to sort out soon, we are approaching foreign policies with a good neighborhood policy," Wahid said.

He said he was initially making Pantar Barat island available to the MILF for six months.

"I think this will be a venue for MILF people to come and go as they like," Wahid added.

He disclosed that the island was the choice of Armed Forces Chief Admiral Widodo Adisucipto.

A military spokesperson later said he believed Wahid was referring to Pantara Barat, a small island with 32 tourist bungalows and a large meeting hall.

"I don't see the point of the offer because Chairman Salamat Hashim is actually a friend of Wahid and he is in and out of Indonesia," Kabalu said.

He said there was still no agreement with the Philippine government on Manado as a venue for the talks because the rebel peace panel had not been formed. *AFP*

Peace talks cheaper than waging war

(From page A1)

way, on April 27-30.

The 32-year-old communist insurgency has claimed thousands of lives and cost the government billions of pesos.

Negotiations with communist guerrillas started in 1986 when Corazon Aquino assumed the presidency after a civilian-backed military revolt ousted the dictator Ferdinand Marcos.

The talks bogged down a year later and resumed in 1992 when Ramos succeeded Aquino. But ousted President Joseph Estrada scrapped the talks.

On Wednesday, Bello proposed that negotiations with the NDF be completed in 18 months or by October 2002.

Bello said six months could be devoted to the three remaining items on the agenda: social and economic reforms, political and constitutional reforms, and the cessation of hostilities and disposition of forces.

He noted that between 1992 and 1998, during the Ramos administration, the government and the NDF signed 10 agreements.

These include the Comprehensive Agreement on the Respect for Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law of March 1998, the first of the four substantive agenda in the talks.

The talks in Oslo will tackle the second substantive item on its agenda, social and economic reforms.

WTO

Part of the NDF's proposed reforms is to "halt the further de-nationalization" of the country's economy by withdrawing membership from the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) forum.

Yesterday, NDF chief negotiator Luis Jalandoni said the NDF would also seek the abrogation of the RP-US Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA), which allows large-scale joint military exercises between the two countries.

He said the VFA was an affront to the country's sovereignty because American troops could freely enter the country and enjoy criminal immunity.

The NDF yesterday pushed for the release of political prisoners, including those convicted for the killing of US Army military adviser James Rowe, despite Malacañang's announcement the other day that the convicts would not be released.

In a visit to the National Bilibid Prisons in Muntinlupa, Jalandoni said the release of more than 70 political prisoners would create a "favorable" atmosphere for the peace talks.

US pressure

Jalandoni pointed out the announcement of Renato Corona, presidential chief of staff, that Rowe's killers would not be released was prompted by letters from former US Ambassador to the Philippines Thomas Hubbard, now with the Asia-Pacific desk of the US State Department, and US charge d'affaires Michael Malinowski.

"We think that this position is wrong because that is bowing to the pressure of the US, which does not like to see the release of Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas," Jalandoni told reporters in Filipino.

He, however, said the release of Continente, Itaas and other political prisoners would not be a condition for the resumption of the peace talks.

Continente and Itaas were convicted of killing Rowe in Quezon City in 1989. Continente's minimum sentence will be completed on Oct. 8, 2001.

For his part, Continente told reporters that he was "happy" to see Jalandoni. "I'm sure the other political prisoners are happy too because we don't see him (Jalandoni) a lot. We see this (peace talks) as a big opportunity for all the political prisoners to be released."

By the NDF's count, there are a total of 250 political prisoners behind bars around the country. So far, the Macapagal administration has released 49 since January and has announced that it will release 24 more. However, the NDF has submitted a recommendation for the release of 40 more, including Continente and Itaas.

"If the 24 out of the 73 and the 40 others for recommendation are released before or during the peace talks, that would be good," Jalandoni said.

NBI chief: Suspects don't mention Ping

(From page A1)

an alleged long-running feud with the PR man.

"I think that's an unfair statement. I had no feud whatsoever with Mr. Dacer," Lacson protested.

In a separate radio interview, he also denied claims that Dacer had once asked him for P20 million to handle a PR campaign for the former police official.

Lacson professed innocence in the presence of Dacer's daughters Emily and Sabina, who came with the latter's husband Chelen Reyes to the hearing.

"There (was) no motive whatsoever on my part to do him harm. I'd like to say that in the presence of the family," Lacson said.

He said that he had dealt with Dacer on only three occasions, including one occasion when he asked him not to "destroy my reputation."

At the time, Dacer was handling a PR job for PNP Chief General Roberto Lastimoso, Lacson's predecessor and then rival.

"I called him up and I just appealed to him, (saying that) if he wanted to advocate for Mr. Lastimoso then he could do that but 'please do not destroy my reputation,'" Lacson testified.

"And he told me 'Brother, I will just withdraw from this contract,' and he did," he said.

Lunch

Lacson said he had gotten Dacer's number from former Comelec chief Justice Harriet Demetriou.

His first meeting with Dacer, he said, was when he and his men at the Presidential Anti-Crime Commission were involved in the notorious Kuratong Baleleng rubout case.

"I was asked by the group to approach him to help us out in our PR effort, but we could not afford the fee of Mr. Dacer so nothing came out of it," Lacson said.

The third and last time he dealt with Dacer, Lacson said, was when he and Demetriou bumped into him at the Manila Hotel where the publicist used to hold office.

"I bumped into him at the Manila Hotel. Again, I was with Justice Demetriou, and he picked up the bill for the food that we ordered," Lacson said.

Demetriou told the INQUIRER in a memo that Lacson's "claim that he had lunch with me and Dacer at the Manila Hotel is not true." She said she was having lunch alone with Dacer at the Cowrie Grill, but bumped into Lacson on her way to the rest room.

Lacson told her he was having lunch at the hotel's coffee shop, she said. She and Dacer later passed by his table to say hello, and Dacer paid for Lacson's lunch, Demetriou said.

Two John Does

Wycoco told the Senate inquiry that the National Bureau of Investigation and the PNP have two unnamed suspects, apparently referring to the crime's masterminds.

Senate Minority Leader Rene Cayetano, committee chair, noted Wycoco's neither-confirm-nor-deny stance when it came to Lacson.

"In fact they have two John Does," Cayetano said to justify giving Lacson the opportunity to air his side.

Flavier said it was unfair that Lacson was the subject of such allegations because he was a senatorial candidate. Lacson is running under the opposition coalition while Flavier is an administration candidate.

"And therefore may I request a direct reply whether there are any statements or evidence that warrant that kind of (accusation) in fairness to General Lacson and the people," Flavier said, addressing Wycoco.

"In fairness also to the NBI, we never mentioned any names as mastermind (sic) at this time, your honor. We are only basing our conclusion and our pronouncements from the evidence we have at hand. As of now, we don't have any evidence to say who the mastermind or masterminds are," Wycoco said.

Cayetano asked Lacson during the hearing if he had reason to believe he would be indicted in the Dacer-Corbito murder case.

Lacson snapped that it was Wycoco who should be asked.

But Wycoco said: "Never at any stage . . . has his name been mentioned as one of those involved in this crime."

Lacson said that if he wanted to cover up the case, he would have not allowed the PNP Criminal Investigation and Detection Group to conduct an investigation after Dacer and Corbito were abducted on Nov. 24.

But Wycoco retorted that the PNP-CIDG at that time was headed by Supt. Francisco Zubia, who was concurrently deputy chief of the PAOCTF.

Crime scene not secured

During the inquiry, opposition Sen. John Osmeña questioned the findings of a forensic pathologist hired by the Dacer family confirming that remains found in a creek in Indang, Cavite, were those of Dacer and Corbito.

Dr. Racquel del Rosario-Fortun of the University of the Philippines College of Medicine told the hearing that she and an assistant personally collected pieces of evidence from the scene of the crime and found two upper dentures which perfectly matched dental records of the two men.

She said such findings were conclusive.

Osmeña, however, pointed out that the police could have planted the dentures at the crime scene, which the doctor visited five months after the two victims were allegedly strangled and then burned.

Osmeña noted Fortun's admission that the scene had not been secured or cordoned off by the police. He also said that since only fragments of bones were found on the scene, she could not really ascertain the gender of the victims or even the number of bodies burned there—much less if the remains belonged to Dacer and Corbito.

Sen. Rodolfo Biazon's beef was with the fact that Fortun personally collected evidence from the scene without proper authorization from investigating agencies.

He noted there are laws protecting crime scenes and the handling of evidence.

But Wycoco said that when the Dacer family enlisted the help of private experts, they cleared the move with him first. He also said that NBI agents were with Fortun when she collected evidence from the site on April 7.

Campaign disrupted

In a radio interview in Cebu, Lacson said CIDG chief Nestorio Gualberto assured him yesterday that the senatorial candidate was "not implicated" in the case.

In Maasin City, Lacson admitted his senatorial campaign has been disrupted by his having to answer queries on the Dacer case.

"Yes, it has greatly disrupted my campaign. In a way, they have succeeded in their demolition job against me," he said, reiterating his belief that the allegations against him are all part of a smear job orchestrated by his critics. ***With reports from Jhunnex Napallacan, Tonton A. Antogop and Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau***

LACSON: They have succeeded in their demolition job. ERIK ARAZAS

Oops, wrong number for JPE

BY JULIET JAVELLANA

THE SENATE hearing on the Dacer double murder case turned into a comedy at one point yesterday, with Sen. Juan Ponce Enrile and a mysterious cell phone texter in the spotlight.

The light moment came after Enrile turned his attention to at least five text messages supposedly sent from the cellular phone of the late publicist Bubby Dacer to daughter Ampy after the PR man's abduction on Nov. 24.

Ampy had forwarded the text messages to National Bureau of Investigation Director Reynaldo Wycoco.

Enrile demanded to know why Wycoco did not bother to trace the text messages to the caller.

The senator said the messages included: "*Tulungan niyo kami at pinapatay na kami*. Ampy should not talk to the NBI. *Bakit ginagdnito pa nila kami, nakaupo na sila. Pag may nangyari sa amin, ang tanungin nyo ay si* _____."(Enrile did not divulge the name.)

Suddenly, interrupting the hearing, the senator said he had just received a text message on his own cell phone commending him for knowing the text messages in detail and urging him to "keep up the good work."

Apparently believing that the sender was being sarcastic, Enrile read the phone number out loud twice in order to have it entered into the Senate records, and warned: "Evidently, there are personalities interested in this case (and) they are watching the developments."

Enrile even asked the Senate committee to "compel" the phone company to identify the owner of the Globe cell phone.

Minutes later, Enrile's cell phone rang and he was overheard apologizing to the caller.

"*Pasensya ka na, hindi ko alam ang number mo*," Enrile said. It turned out that the sender of the text message was someone he knew.

The INQUIRER phoned the mysterious caller, who declined to identify himself. He said he was from Iligan City and that the senator did not know him personally. But the man said he had been texting Enrile regularly for the past two months with messages of support.

In other words, he was Johnny's text pal. ***With a report from Stella Gonzales***

'Cops took my hubby against his will'

(From page A1)

ing after seven other suspects named him as one of those who allegedly tailed and abducted Dacer and his driver Manuel Corbito.

"The police investigators just did their job, went to see Inspector Langcauon and invited him for questioning because of the gravity of his alleged participation in the crime based on the other suspects' testimony," De Gracia said.

"Right then and there, the PNP decided to place him under protective custody."

According to suspects' affidavits, Langcauon was one of the armed men who seized Dacer and Corbito at the corner of Osmeña Highway and Zobel Roxas Street on Nov. 24, 2000.

Araceli wants Mendoza and CIDG head Chief Supt. Roberto Gualberto in particular to explain why her husband should not be released immediately.

"Despite the fact that (Langcauon) has been confined, detained and restrained for nearly three days, no formal complaint or accusation for any specific offense has been filed against him nor any judicial writ or order for his commitment has at any time been issued," the wife charged.

Araceli also insisted that her husband was being held against his will.

Weak heart

She said that when Langcauon was picked up for questioning, CIDG members who went to their house "did not show proof of legal authority to compel (him) to heed their demand despite (my) request for the same."

FORENSIC pathologist Dr. Raquel Fortun and NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco testifying at the Senate hearing on the Dacer murder. ERIK ARAZAS

"Left with no other option, (my husband) was constrained to go with the members of the CIDG," Araceli complained.

She also filed an urgent motion urging the appellate court to resolve her petition as soon as possible on the grounds that Langcauon suffers from hypertension and a weak heart.

Langcauon is one of eight suspects being held in safe houses allegedly for their own protection.

De Gracia, PNP spokesperson, assured the wife that her husband was in good hands and would come to no harm.

Asked if Langcauon's wife would be allowed to visit her husband at the safe house, De Gracia said, "Security measures are being tightened now because the suspects have yet to testify in court. Their testimony in court is very material to the case. Their affidavits would be deemed useless if they did not make it to court to testify."

"It is best for Langcauon to be secured first. His family can visit him if there is no longer any problem with security," De Gracia said.

Langcauon and seven other suspects in the double murder case have been brought to safe houses to protect them from the suspected masterminds of the crime, according to De Gracia.

"The four officers of the defunct Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force and four civilian agents (allegedly) involved in the murders . . . have been placed under the protective custody of the PNP to keep them safe from possible harm from the masterminds," the spokesperson said.

Surrender feelers

The PNP, he said, was awaiting the decision of the Department of Justice as to which of the suspects would be tapped as state witnesses.

Housed in the safe houses are PAOCTF officers Langcauon, SPO4 Mariano Soberano, SPO3 Jose Escalante, SPO1 Mauro Torres and civilian agents Crisostomo Purificacion, Renato Malabanan, Jovencio Malabanan and Rommel Rollan.

Torres allegedly strangled Dacer on the night of Nov. 24, according to some of the suspects' accounts.

Held by the NBI, on the other hand, are PAOCTF civilian agents Alex Diloy and brothers William and Jimmy Lopez.

Eight more suspects remain at large.

One of them, Supt. Glenn Dumlao, sent surrender feelers to the CIDG at 11 a.m. yesterday, according to CIDG chief Gualberto.

Relying on Viña

But if Dumlao, and Chief Insp. Vicente Arnado—whom suspects have named as being two of the highest ranking officers involved in the actual crime—insist that they do not know the masterminds, the NBI will be left with no recourse but to rely on the testimony of Senior Supt. Teofilo Viña to unmask the big bosses, a bureau insider told the INQUIRER.

Only the testimony of Viña will prove if former PNP and Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force chief Panfilo Lacson Jr. had something to do with the abductions and murders, according to the insider.

The insider said that so far the agency had gathered sufficient and "solid" evidence to indict Viña, the head of the PAOCTF task force Visayas under the previous administration.

NBI Director Reynaldo Wycoco has not lodged formal charges against him before the Department of Justice. The insider said the delay in indicting Viña indicated that the agency wanted Viña to testify against his superiors.

Coerced?

In Cebu City, Lacson said the policemen-suspects might have been forced to admit involvement in the abduction and murders.

But Mendoza denied the suspects were coerced. "We did not do anything illegal," he said.

And De Gracia said that "there was no need to subject them to torture to obtain confession because they voluntarily gave their testimony."

Besides, De Gracia said, the stories of the eight suspects in the custody of the PNP corroborated the statements of the three other suspects being held by the NBI.

"The eight suspects now in the PNP protective custody and the three suspects being held by the NBI do not see eye to eye but their confessions were consistent. They corroborated one another's claim," De Gracia said.

Intimidated

But Lacson said that in his experience in law enforcement, he has not encountered a suspect who immediately admits involvement in a crime unless he is intimidated or forced into doing so.

"If you are under (police) custody, a lot of things can happen. Afterwards, they (suspects) will retract (their testimony) saying they were just forced to (confess). So let's just wait for the investigation to be completed," Lacson told radio dyLA yesterday.

Lacson said he believes Viña was illegally detained by the PNP.

Mendoza earlier said, Viña was not presented during the press conference on Wednesday because he was still undergoing tactical interrogation.

Mendoza, in another interview yesterday, said Viña voluntarily reported to him and gave information on the Dacer-Corbito case.

Cebuano police

Arnado, one of the Cebuano policemen implicated in the Dacer case, filed for early retirement in March, Mendoza said.

Arnado reportedly flew to Honolulu, Hawaii, where he has some relatives, but Mendoza said there were also reports that the suspect was still in Manila.

Four other Cebuano policemen from the defunct PAOCTF are being hunted down for their alleged involvement in the Dacer case. SPO4 Benjamin Taladua, SPO3 William Reed III, SPO4 Roberto Nemenio and PO3 Mario Sarmiento have been absent without leave (AWOL) since Jan. 26, shortly after Lacson resigned as PNP chief.

Another Cebuano policeman, PO2 Tomas Sarmiento, surrendered on Wednesday to Senior Supt. Alejandro Lapinid, Cebu City Police chief, upon learning that he, too, was implicated in the Dacer case.

Sarmiento denied any involvement in the abduction. He said he was at the Carbon police precinct, where he was previously assigned, on the day of the crime.

PO2 Sarmiento is the younger brother of PO3 Sarmiento, another suspect. Arnado is married to the Sarmientos' sister, Myrna, who is also a member of the police.

Myrna denied that her husband had left the country.

She said her husband and brother were in Manila, but refused to give their exact location.

Police sources in Cebu City said Reed and Nemenio were also in Manila with PO3 Sarmiento.

"They're all together because there may be some attempts to silence them," a police source said.

Lapinid said Nemenio was last seen in Barili town, Cebu, on April 14, but reportedly ran away when he saw a team of policemen. ***With reports from Michael Lim Ubac; Jhunnex Napallacan, Tonton A. Antogop and Jani Arnaiz, PDI Visayas Bureau***

Palace orders SSS to defer dues hike

(From page A1)

8.4 percent of a member's monthly salary to 10-12 percent would be deferred until the economy improves.

"We will not do it in the next two years. I don't think we will be allowed by our public," said Templo, also the chief actuary of the SSS.

Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo, who supervises government financial institutions including the SSS, also assured the public that the Macapagal administration would not allow the pension fund to raise the dues this year.

"Any increase will not happen soon and definitely not this year. SSS will also have to justify any plan to raise contributions in the future," the finance secretary said.

SSS president Vitaliano Nañagas II announced on Monday that the SSS premiums paid by members would have to be raised this year after the agency posted heavy losses during the Estrada administration.

Employers and workers alike are opposing the SSS plan to raise the monthly contributions.

The Mindanao Business Council said the SSS plan was unacceptable because it would impose additional burdens on both employees and employers at a time that business was performing badly.

The Kilusang Mayo Uno described as "insensitive" to the plight of the workers any move to raise the SSS premium.

Templo said that the need to raise the monthly contributions had been felt over the past 10 years because money spent for members' benefits had surpassed contributions.

Last year alone, benefits exceeded contributions by P3.5 billion, which meant losses of the same amount for the pension fund.

Nevertheless, the SSS earned a total of P10.9 billion from investments last year, according to Templo.

Although the amount was lower by P6.2 billion from that of the previous year, it allowed the SSS to post a net income of P3.4 billion, down from about P13 billion during the time of former President Fidel V. Ramos.

Templo came up with the net income of P3.4 billion by subtracting from the P10.9 billion that the SSS earned from investments P4 billion in operating expenses and P3.5 billion in losses arising from higher benefits.

SSS has more than P181 billion in assets, including P27 billion in cash and government securities. Its reserve fund stood at P165 billion by the end of last year.

An analyst pointed out that SSS monthly dues were much lower than that of the Government Service and Insurance System, which caters to public servants.

But SSS benefits are almost the same if not better than GSIS'. GSIS collects about 20 percent from its members' monthly salaries.

Romulo said the administration understood the situation of SSS but he said there were other remedies like improving the collection of monthly dues and engaging in safer yet higher yielding investments.

It's 'tule' for politicos . . .

(From page A1)

politicos are sponsoring *kugui* (circumcision), deworming and anti-malnutrition drives and distributing primers for day-care pupils.

The candidates have also sponsored fogging operations in villages here to rid households of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

Hundreds of boys in the province took advantage of the free "Operation Kugui" ("tule" in Pilipino) recently sponsored by provincial candidates.

Other children benefited from the deworming programs in villages as well as the distribution of free medicines to combat malnutrition.

With dengue fever expected to recur in summer, several candidates sent a team to fumigate areas suspected to be breeding grounds of dengue-carrying mosquitoes.

The candidates also took advantage of the throng that gathered during Holy Week here to court votes. During the Holy Week procession here, relatives of candidates were seen distributing candles to children.

Candidates also sponsored mass weddings in at least three towns while a local aspirant distributed T-shirts printed with the face of Christ and his name to a group that pulled the float of the Santo Entierro (the Dead Christ).

Ana nips Pharma, retains 2nd place

By Dennis Eroa

ANA Freezer continued its amazing showing with a come-from-behind 67-66 victory over PharmaQuick and solidified its hold of second spot last night in the PBL Chairman's Cup at the Makati Coliseum.

Exciting Ronald Tubid and skipper Rey Mendez keyed the Freezer Kings' victory with two triples in the final two minutes, while playmaker Paul Artadi unnerved the Pharmacists with his hustle.

Ana improved its win-loss record to 4-1, while PharmaQuick dropped to 2-3. It also marked the third straight time that coach Rudy Mendoza steered the Freezer Kings to victory.

Shark Energy Drink is on top with five straight wins.

"The players deserved all the kudos. They refused to lose," said Mendoza as he lauded the support being given by assistant coaches Mendez and Jun Molina.

Bruce Dacia waltzed his way to 24 points, nine in the fourth quarter as PharmaQuick took a 64-59 lead. The 6-foot-3 Dacia, however, contributed to PharmaQuick's downfall as he made two costly errors in the dying seconds.

Roland Pascual, Leo Villar, Dondon Mendoza and Ariel de Castro worked beautifully as they alternated in shackling Omanzie Rodriguez in the shaded lane.

Earlier, titleholder Welcoat Paints escaped with a scary 78-74 triumph over GIV Beauty Soap for its second win in five games.

The Paintmasters seemed headed for another horrendous collapse but got a lift when Yancy de Ocampo canned two charities in the dying seconds which gave them a 77-74 lead. 23.6 seconds remaining.

GIV, which absorbed its second straight setback after a 2-0 start, closed in dangerously when Egay Billones capped its swirling comeback from 17 points down, 32-49, with a layup for a 72-73 count, 3:14 left.

But GIV was stymied by Ogie Gumatay's two straight turnovers in the final two minutes which gave Welcoat enough breathing room.

"The desire to win is back," said Welcoat mentor Junel Baculi.

Their previous losses happened after they surrendered double-digit figures which cast doubts on their ability to thrive under pressure.

Ren Ren Ritualo went perfect from the three-point area as he sank all his five attempts for 19 points, while Jojo Manalo and De Ocampo combined for 25.

Marlon Legaspi led GIV with 24 points but struggled in the fourth quarter, leaving Eric de la Cuesta (9 points) and Billones (19 points) to take up the scoring load.

The scores:

First game:

WELCOAT 78—Ritualo 19, De Ocampo 13, Manalo 12, Ofrecio 9, Cruz 7, Canlas 6, Encarnacion 4, Tan 4, Tolentino 4, Patrimonio 0.

GIV 74—Legaspi 24, Billones 19, Bacani 10, De la Cuesta 9, Sanz 4, Gumatay 4, Calo 4, Prior 0, Daliva 0, Roldan 0.

Quarters: 28-16, 49-35, 66-55, 78-74.

Second game:

ANA FREEZER 67—Pascual 18, Mendoza D 10, Mendez 8, Artadi 8, Tubid 8, Vilar 7, Capus 4, De Castro 2, Mendoza 2.

PHARMAQUICK 66—Dacia 24, Avenido 13, Lanete 7, Rodriguez 6, Lapinid 4, Canoneo 4, Romero 2, Lim 2, Jabar 2, Alfad 2, Jones 0, Velez 0.

Quarters:16-14, 40-32, 55-53, 67-66.

Miñoza, Cuello 9 down

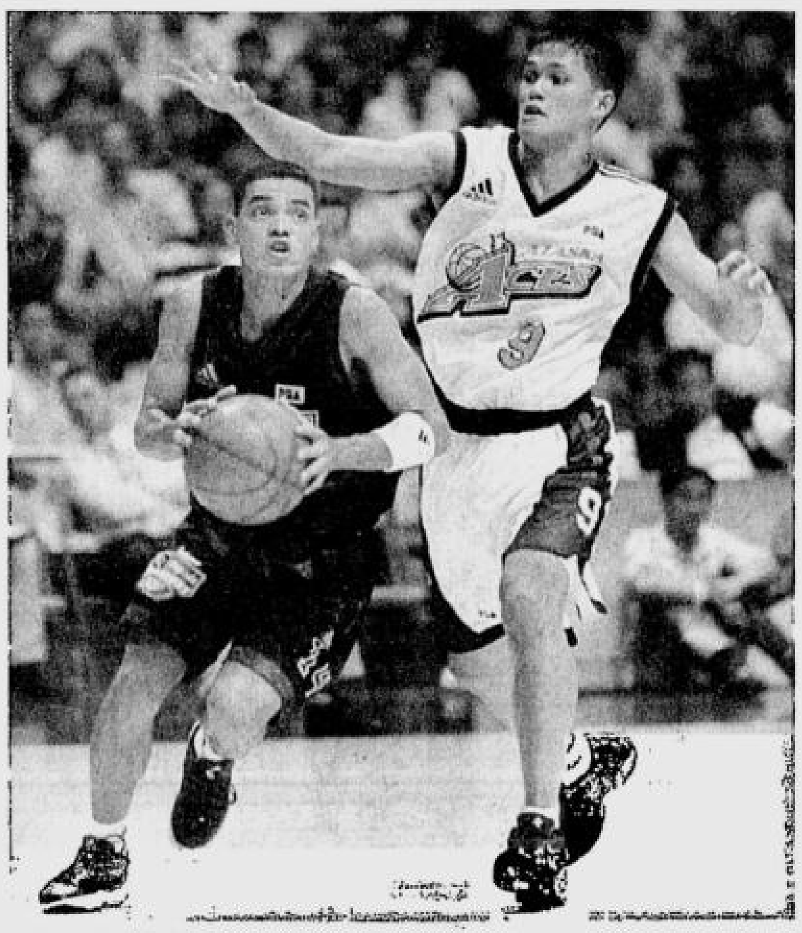
FRANKIE Miñoza took a costly triple-bogey on the first hole en route to a two-over-par 73 yesterday that left him in a big group at 63rd spot like compatriot Rodrigo Cuello at the start of the Kirin Open golf championship at the demanding Ibaragi layout.

Miñoza, ranked fourth in the current Japan Tour Order of Merit, needed a big windup of two birdies on the last three holes to keep his chances alive in the event where Japanese Shingo Katayama and Peter Senior showed the way by one stroke after similar 64s.

Gerald Rosales himself suffered a triple bogey misadventure on the 18th for a 76 that put him in 97th spot and gravely in danger of missing the cut in his first stint here. He had a poor start of three bogeys on the first six holes but battled back with birdies on the 11th and 15th.

Meanwhile, Dorothy Joy Delasin and Jennifer Rosales see action in the Long Drugs Challenge starting today at the Twelve Bridges Golf Club in Lincoln, California.

Jong Arcano



PBA ACTION

Johnny Abarrientos of Pop Cola (left) drives against Rodney Santos of Alaska Milk during their PBA game Wednesday night at the Araneta Coliseum. The Aces won, 78-71, to force a rubber match for a semis seat against the Panthers. *PBA story on A24.* ROMY HOMILLADA

Callaway demo today

CALLAWAY has scheduled another major Demo Day for its hot-selling drivers—the ERC II and VFT—today at the Southpoint driving range in Alabang.

Today's demo session at Southpoint will be from 4 to 7 p.m. with the Callaway staff set to give prospective buyers an overview of the technology of the clubs.

Glenn Baroma, general manager of exclusive local Callaway distributor Electrobus Inc., said that the new drivers are all available at authorized outlets nationwide.

RP 5 to pay courtesy call on Gloria

THE VICTORIOUS Philippine men's team will be paying a courtesy call on President Arroyo sometime next week.

Fresh from their sweep of the 4th South East Asia Basketball Championship recently, the Nationals would be accompanied by Gov. Luis Chavit Singson, project director of the Seaba organizing committee, co-chair Philip Ella Juico and Fernando Carrascoso and officials of the Basketball Association of the Philippines.

The Nationals, led by skipper and Seaba MVP Romel Adducul and Finals best player Chris Calaguio, are going to present to Ms Arroyo the championship trophy they won at the expense of the Thais.

Also going with the 16-player roster is the coaching staff headed by Boyzie Zamar and deputies Bong Ramos and Caezar Polhen.

Executive Secretary Renato de Villa received the BAP request letter on Wednesday and assured Ms Arroyo's acceptance.

Roy Luarca

Stalking

SPECTATOR

Al S. Mendoza

YOU can say you're in love with someone. But if that someone does not love you, stop your amorous intentions immediately or you could be jailed. That is, if you pursue your love by being near her most of the time, if not all of the time. Your crime: Stalking.

A 46-year-old Croatian-born naval architect from Australia found this out too late as he was recently convicted for stalking Martina Hingis, the world No. 1 tennis player.

Dubravko Rajcevic, who told the court he fell in love with Hingis and followed her to tournaments around the world despite Martina's pleas to stay away, could face up to four years in prison.

The AP report said Rajcevic (pronounced Rachevits) initially showed no reaction when the verdict was read, then gave a half-smile.

During trial, he told jurors he was convinced Martina Hingis, 20, once loved him, but had probably found someone else while he was detained for the trial.

"Yes, I believe she was in love with me, but I've been in jail for one year," Rajcevic said. "She's young, beautiful, famous. In one year, she's probably found someone else."

Psychologists who evaluated Rajcevic concluded he was delusional but mentally competent to stand trial.

Rajcevic said he fell in love with Hingis after seeing her on television while at home in Australia in 1999. He began sending her faxes and letters expressing his admiration for her and traveled to her home in Switzerland to deliver flowers.

Hingis testified in court that she told him in person and by phone to stay away.

"I told him he should get out of my life, I didn't want to talk with him anymore. I wouldn't want to spend any time with him," Hingis said.

Frank Abrams, Rajcevic's lawyer, said his client never threatened Hingis and argued that Rajcevic was only trying to romance a woman beyond his reach.

Listen to the lawyer's argument: "The pursuit, no matter how implausible, cannot be punished."

What do you think?

The judge thought otherwise and ordered Rajcevic guilty of stalking.

I agree with him. If your love does not love you, it's none of your business stalking her.

I think Rajcevic, because he's become more of an irritant than as lover, ought to be punished and put behind bars. Kind of like teaching him a lesson.

Anyway, real lovers are always ready to sacrifice in the name of love. He can even boast that his imprisonment is proof of his undying love for Martina. He can always romance long-distance with Martina. No jail in the world can silence the beating of a heart.

Love knows no walls.

Ateneo leads Fr. Martin Cup field

MORE than 40 teams, led by defending senior champion Ateneo, will see action in the 7th Fr. Martin Cup invitational basketball tournament which opens on April 28 at the Rizal Memorial Coliseum.

Also vying in the event sanctioned by the Basketball Association of the Philippines led by Gonzalo "Lito" Puyat II and jointly sponsored by Agfa, Photo Plus, Red Bull and Smart-Piltel are 19 senior, 18 junior and seven women's teams.

Organizer Noel Ascue announced the entries yesterday during a press conference hosted by Café Provencale. According to Ascue, there are other teams which have signified their desire to join.

The other contenders are.

Seniors—FEU, UST, NU, College of St. Benilde, Jose Rizal University, University of Perpetual Help-Rizal, Letran, San Beda, PCU-Dasmariñas, St. Jude College, UE, UP, Adamson University, San Sebastian College, Mapua Tech, Philippine Christian University, TIP, San Beda B and UST B.

Juniors –Mapua (defending champion), Ateneo, Adamson, UP Integrated School, Letran, San Beda A and B, Xavier School, UNO High, La Salle Greenhills, UPH-R, De La Salle-Zobel, UE, San Sebastian, PCU, Philippine College of Criminology and Ateneo B.

Women—Adamson (defending champion), St. Benilde, FEU, UST A and B UP and UE.

"This (tournament) is a fitting tribute to our good friend, the late Fr. Edgar A. Martin, who had served as BAP secretary general for a long time," stressed Puyat. "The field is not only big but impressive. I congratulate the organizers and wish the participating teams success."

Puyat also cited well-known businessmen-sportsmen Manuel Pangilinan of PLDT and George Chua of Agfa/Red Bull for their support.

Other members of the BAP Board who unanimously endorsed the event are OIC Moying Martelino, secretary general Nic Jorge, Commissioners Jun Bernardino (PBA), Chino Trinidad (PBL) and Ogie Narvasa (MBA), treasurer Ricky Palou, auditor/technical committee chair Renaldo (OXO) Tang, lawyer Dodo Dulay and Tito Tagle.

Fr. Martin, S.J. came to Manila in the mid 20s and coached Ateneo to the NCAA title in 1928. He also handled Ateneo's champion baseball team and founded the school paper, Guidon. Later, he joined the BAP which he served with distinction.

The Fr. Martin Cup tourney, which serves as preview of major college events UAAP and NCAA, will be held on Wednesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays at Rizal Memorial UE, FEU and PCU gyms.

Capriati, Mauresmo in; Vicario out

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Arantxa Sanchez-Vicario's record 15th singles appearance at the Family Circle was one of her shortest as she lost to Elena Likhovtseva 6-3, 6-4 Wednesday night.

The fifth-seeded Sanchez-Vicario has been one of the tournament's most successful performers. Her 28 match wins rank third behind Chris Evert (50) and Martina Navratilova (36) on Family Circle's list.

But the 29-year-old Spaniard, seeded fifth here and ranked 10th in the world, didn't look sharp in her first match at the new Tennis Centre at Daniel Island.

She quickly fell behind Likhovtseva 3-5, 1-3 before a brief rally evened the second set. Then Likhovtseva, ranked 39th in the world, won eight straight points to put herself in position for the upset.

Sanchez-Vicario held off two match points to win the set's ninth game, but netted a forehand and sent Likhovtseva's 100 mph serve past the baseline to lose in the second round or earlier for just the fourth time since she first came here in 1987.

The second-seeded Capriati, playing for the first time since losing the Ericsson Open final to Venus Williams on March 31, won eight straight games during one stretch to defeat Rossana de los Rios 6-4, 6-3.

Mauresmo, seeded seventh, ran her match streak to 15 straight by beating Marissa Irvin 6-2, 3-6, 6-3. Other seeded players who won Wednesday included No. 4 Amanda Coetzer, No. 6 Mary Pierce, No. 9 Paola Suarez, No. 11 Lisa Raymond and No. 15 Henrieta Nagyova.

Alpuerto sets up final against Godoy

SECOND seed Vida Alpuerto outplayed No. 4 Julie Ann Cadiente, 6-2, 6-4, yesterday to advance in the girls' 18-under final against third pick Charise Godoy in the Tru-flex National Age Group Championships at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center.

The Tangub City-based Godoy trailed 3-6 in the first set but was handed the victory when leading at 5-0, Berry Sepulveda retired due to exhaustion in the second frame.

Also gaining championship slots in this tournament sponsored by PSC, PLDT, Magnolia Fruit Drinks, Mondo, Prince, Toby's and Viva Mineral Water were favorites Melissa Orteza, Raymond Villarete and Bambi Zoleta. Orteza defeated Regine Monsod, 6-1, 6-1.

Knicks clinch 4th seed

NEW YORK—With the end of the regular season, all the first-round NBA playoff matchups became finalized, when the New York Knicks defeated the Detroit Pistons, 94-88, to clinch the fourth seed in the Eastern Conference and homecourt advantage in the first round.

Also Wednesday, Toronto defeated Washington, 98-92, to lock up the fifth seed ahead of Charlotte.

"We are looking forward to what we think will be one of our most competitive and unpredictable playoffs in years," commissioner David Stern said.

The Western Conference matchups were finalized after Tuesday night's games, and the NBA released the playoff schedule for that conference during the afternoon.

With the best-of-five first round spread over 14 days, there will be plenty of downtime around the league.

The San Antonio Spurs and Minnesota Timberwolves, for instance, will have four full days off between Games 2 and 3. The teams play each other Saturday and Monday, then don't play again until the following Saturday.

The Trail Blazers and Lakers will have three days off between Games 1 and 2, and Dallas and Utah will have the same amount of time off between Games 2 and 3.

In the East, the Knicks and Raptors will have three days off after Game 1 Sunday, while the 76ers and Pacers will have three days off between Games 2 and 3.

There will be eight games played this weekend.

Saturday's schedule includes Philadelphia-Indiana, Dallas-Utah, Minnesota-San Antonio and Charlotte-Miami. Sunday's games are Toronto-New York, Phoenix-Sacramento, Portland-Los Angeles and Orlando-Milwaukee.

NBA results

Charlotte 97, Boston 92; Toronto 98, Washington 92; Chicago 92, Philadelphia 86; Indiana 105, Cleveland 101, OT; New York 94, Detroit 88; Miami 103, Orlando 91; Dallas 120, Minnesota 100; Denver 110, Sacramento 100; Seattle 105, San Antonio 67; Phoenix 98, Utah 93; Vancouver 95, Golden State 81. *AP*

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Blockbuster derby returns at Araneta

THE NATIONAL Cockers Association will mark the resumption of its yearlong 15-leg NCA 7-Cock derby circuit on April 23-25 at the Araneta Coliseum, featuring the very best fighting cocks of the country's most prominent cocker-breeders.

Three-cock elimination fights will be held on Monday, April 23, ending with the four-cock finals on Wednesday, April 25.The blockbuster derby will be hosted by Boy Velez, Romy Pamatmat, Johnny Jalandoni, Boy Nilo Lizares and Louie Cua.

Heading the entry book are past derby champions Jessie Viceo (San Rafael), Alan Tan and Patrick Puno (Capitan III), Big Dome owner Nene Araneta (Thunderbird-Firefly IV), Corry Fevidal (Geran), Ruel Ricafort and E. Santos (RT 114 Geran Mapalad), Pampanga's Eric Yu (new Guagua Coliseum), popular lawyer Rudy Salud (Winning Time-DVH), Nene Araneta (Thunderbird-Firefly II), the Firefly Group (Thunderbird-Firefly 13), Rudy Albano (Mulawin Argem Coliseum II) and Vic Yu (Ucap International).

Likewise competing are Danding Cojuangco, James Chiongbian, Gov. Ito Yñares, Jun "Idol" Santiago, famous breeder Boy Jiao, Jun Cometa, Pampanga's Jingco and Madlambayan brothers, Alex and Gery Escalona, Georgie Antonio, Gov. Raul Molintas, Jojo Binay, Ferdie and Tanggol Eusebio, Jun Velasco, Manny Co, Blandy Tolentino, Boyboy Roa, Pepito Ngo, Boy Diaz, Al Velex, Boy Lechon, Pol Estrellado, Erning Zubia, Paul Dy, William Co, Boy Garcia, Sonny Lagon, Rolly Ligon and Ramon Mansenares.

RACING TIPS

AT SANTA ANA BY MR. 999

Race 1—1. Miss New York 2. Simlong 3. Precious Janina 4. Cristalina
Race 2—1. Sunny Sky 2. Winning Rose 3. Courage 4. All Powerful
Race 3—1. Duke Mark 2. Princely Native 3. Exchange Deal 4. Dragon Heart 5. Glory Be
Race 4—1. Adam's Call 2. Mr. Millennium 3. Dancin' Indy 4. Silver Angel 5. Speed Charm
Race 5—1. Daseldurf 2. Silver Gray 3. Sunrise 4. Achilles Heel 5. Rainmaker
Race 6—1. The Magician 2. Free Entrance 3. Something Best 4. Baby My Beloved 5. Silver Lining
Race 7—1. Hope 2. Strong Element 3. Roman Leader 4. Lady Chip 5. Ebony Starr
Race 8—1. Made to Order 2. Nevada Dancer 3. Roman Dance 4. Rock's Dragon 5. Two Thumbs Up
Race 9—1. Touch of Luck 2. Al's Princess 3. Princess Helena 4. Run for Cash 5. Marissa's Diane

Asian Zonal chess slated April 23-30

NATIONAL Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP) president GM Eugene Torre announced yesterday that extra slots will be up for grabs for local players in the Asian Zonal Chess Championship slated April 23-30 at the Laguna Room of the Grand Boulevard Hotel in Manila.

The additional qualifiers will be determined through a 9-round Swiss system tournament on April 21-22 at the Grandmaster's Café, 71 Timog Avenue, Quezon City.

"According to Zone president Ignatius Leong, there is a strong possibility that five extra berths will be allotted to the Filipino chessers as per Fide Regulation," said Torre. "Also, the NCFP will also allow the sponsors to field one or two players of their own choosing."

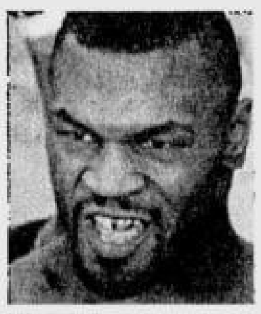
The following players are invited to participate: NM Emmanuel Senador, NM Richard Bitoon, FM Idel Datu, NM Yves Raola, IM Barlo Nadera, IM Nelson Mariano II, IM Ricky de Guzman, IM Chito Garma, IM Mark Paragua, NM Julio Catalino Sadorra, NM Oliver Barbosa, NM John Paul Gomez, FM Fernie Donguines, IM Ronald Bancod, NM Ronald Dableo, FM Jesse Noel Sales, NM Darwin Laylo, NM Reggie Olay, NM Roland Joseph Perez, NM Mirabeau Maga, FM Elmer Carag, NM Petronio Roca and FM Sander Severino.

The players were chosen based on the following criteria (1) National Open finalists (2) 8.5 pointers in the eliminations active, if IM (or those with GM norms) (3) those with high Fide rating and (4) Junior/Kiddie standouts.

Time control for the two-day elims is 25 minutes with increment. The tournament starts promptly at 9 a.m.

For confirmation, call Philippine Chess Society at tel. 929-3583 or the NCFP at tel. 453-2161 to 65.

Tyson back June 2 vs Nigerian rival


TYSON

WASHINGTON—Former heavyweight champion Mike Tyson will return to the boxing ring in a 10-round bout here June 2 against Nigerian David Izon, managers for the fighters and telecaster Showtime announced Wednesday.

Tyson, 48-2 with 42 knockouts, has not fought since Poland's Andrew Golota quit after two rounds against him last October in suburban Detroit.

Tyson stopped fellow American Lou Savarese in 38 seconds last June in Glasgow, Scotland, and stopped England's Julius Francis in the second round in January of last year at Manchester, England.

Izon, 27-3 with 23 knockouts, is ranked ninth among heavyweight contenders by the World Boxing Association.

Discussions were made to conduct the fight in Australia before the United States capitol was selected as the host site.

AFP

Gomez tops jr active tourney 1st leg

FINAL STANDINGS: (6-round Swiss): Gomez, 5.5; Salvador, 1, Aton, 5.0; Magallanes, Nava, Banawa, 4.5; Bayron, Espallardo, Reyes, Dableo, Pimentel, Cruz, A. Aton, 4.0 (42 players)

FOURTEEN-YEAR-OLD National Master John Paul Gomez fashioned out an impressive 5.5 points out of 6 to capture the title in the 1st leg of the Juniors (Under-20) Active Chess Open held at the Grandmasters' Café in Quezon City last Wednesday night.

The youngest-ever junior champ in the country at age 13, Gomez stamped his class with five wins and a draw. He underscored his mastery on the checkered boards with victories opposite UST Board 1 player Roland Salvador, Roderick Nava, Joaquin Carlos Banawa, Minda Flores, Alexander Esguerra and settled for a truce with UAAP MVP awardee Bernard Templo of Ateneo high school.

Gomez thus advanced to the Juniors active grand finals on May 11 together with runner-up Salvador, Irwin Aton (3rd), Rey Jomar Magallanes (4th), Nava (5th), Banawa (6th), Abraham Bayron (7th), Carl Espallardo (8th), and Leonard Reyes (9th) and Arnold Dableo (10th).

For more information, please call Joey Moseros or Nora Managuelod at 929-3583, 414-2302.

Zone defense worth a try

CLEAN LIVING

Manolo R. Iñigo

"FILIPINOS should start playing zone defense," a basketball reader once wrote, "because we will always be at a disadvantage when playing in international tournaments."

If memory serves, Rico Xeres of Greenhills sent us this letter after the Philippines lost to China and South Korea in the 1998 Asian Games held in Bangkok. The country was then represented by the Philippine Centennial Team, coached by Tim Cone and bannered by marquee players of the Philippine Basketball Association.

According to Xeres, China (which eventually beat Korea for the Asiad gold medal) can be beaten by the Philippines in the future. But to do so, the Philippines needs tall and fast forward/guards in the mold of Danny Ildefonso, Jun Limpot, Rommel Adducul and Dennis Espino, among others, to stop the fast-breaking Chinese from penetrating the lane.

"And we have to play the zone," he said.

I also recall that in stressing his point, Xeres had urged the PBA to change its rules and permit the use of the zone defense since "all the teams in Asia, Europe and South America play zone. It is only the NBA (National Basketball Association) and the PBA which prohibit the zone defense."

Xeres should be happy now because the NBA has already eliminated the illegal defense rule by playing the zone and mulling plans to use it during the pre-season. While the PBA, facing dwindling gate receipts, is seriously studying the suggestion to play the zone mainly to enable the fans to see more player and ball movement, more passing, more shooting from the perimeter area and better teamwork.

Ricky Palou, the league's technical director, said many coaches have agreed to play the zone, adding that it would be good for the PBA and the fans as well. Besides, Palou noted, the game has become monotonous in some ways because of predictable isolation plays.

* * *

BEST OF LUCK. Dapper Ed Soliman, a longtime family friend, has been appointed Interior undersecretary for local government, replacing another esteemed friend, Jun Santiago. To both of them, good luck and good fortune in the days to come… Kudos, too, to hardworking Graham Lim, secretary general of the Basketball Association of the Philippine headed by Tiny Literal, for the recent staging of the 4th South East Asia Basketball Association championship. And congratulations likewise to the hard-fighting Philippine men's team, coached by Boyzie Zamar, for retaining the title with aplomb, beating Thailand, 90-73, in the battle for the gold. The Philippines and Thailand will represent the region in the ABC tournament in Shanghai this July.

* * *

COCKING CALENDAR. It will be a busy summer for the sport of sabong or cockfighting, the Filipinos' favorite pastime. On April 23-25, the National Cockers Association will hold the 10th leg of a 15-leg NCA 7-Cock derby at the famous Araneta Coliseum in Cubao. Also worth watching are big-time four-cock derbies on May 4, hosted by cocker-breeder Jobo del Rosario at the Pasay City Cockpit and on May 3, promoted by lawyer Atlee Viray and friends at the Pampanga Coliseum in San Fernando… Cheers to Susan Alvos for hosting another successful four-cock derby at the well-maintained Valenzuela Cockpit and Sports Arena. Susan is always a source of fascination for staging well-attended and widely participated derbies at the popular cockpit north of Manila.

* * *

For inquiries, call fax/phone (044) 933-1214.

Dr. De Castro cagefest tomorrow

THE Dr. Rolando de Castro Cup basketball tournament fires off tomorrow (April 21) at the Bajoga court in Navotas City.

Organizing the event is Banjo de Castro, while assisting him are Rolando dela Cruz, Ban Santos, Boy Charing and Nitoy Soriano.

Serving as advisers are former PBL player Bochok delos Santos, Senior Supt. Rafael Provido, SPO1 Hector de la Cruz, SPO1 Reymundo Bautista, Eugene Sandel, Diavee Javier and Andy Macalinao.

Runnex clinic Sunday

EXECUTIVE Runner Club-Philippine (Runnex) will launch on Sunday at 6 a.m. the oldest running clinic in the country at the Quezon Memorial Circle, Elliptical Road, Quezon City.

Billed as the Runnex-Pharmaton Sunday Running Clinic, the scientific teaching of fun runners, health buffs and competitive runners on how to complete a full marathon will be handled by training director Amante Pangilinan, according to Lito Duran of the organizing group.

Former Philippine Sports Commission chair Philip Ella Juico will grace the occasion that will last up to the first week of December in time for the graduation that will coincide with the annual Executive Run of Runnex.

Interested parties are requested to come early for them to register infront of the Runnex shed in the circle before the start of the event.

SPORTS ON TV

COMPILED BY LORENZO MANGUIAT

TENNIS: WTA Ericsson Open Finals at 2 p.m. (r) on Star Sports

Masters Series (Monte Carlo), Early Round Coverage Day #3 at 2 p.m. (r), Day #4 at 8 p.m. on ESPN

GOLF: PGA Worldcom Classic - The Heritage of Golf Highlights at 8 a.m. (r) on Star Sports

Inside the PGA Tour at 11:30 a.m. (r - 8 p.m.) on Star Sports

PGA Shell Houston Open, First Round at 11 p.m. (delayed) on Star Sports

BASKETBALL: NBA Inside Stuff at 8:30 p.m. on Star Sports

BILLIARDS: Sudden Death 7-Ball Billiards at 10 p.m. on ESPN

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Torre Scoop's main guest

GRANDMASTER Eugene Torre will be the main guest today in the weekly Sports Communicators Organization of the Philippines (Scoop) forum at the Kamayan West Avenue. Torre, also the president of the National Chess Federation of the Philippines (NCFP), will discuss the nationals' chances in the Asian Zonal Championship the country will be hosting despite lacking the financial support to back-up their training and preparation.

SPORTS

AL S. MENDOZA, Editor ■ EDWIN M. VILLANUEVA, Assistant Editor

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2 do-or-die games in PBA today

GAMES TODAY *(Philsports)*
5:15 p.m. – Mobiline vs Shell
7:30 p.m. – Purefoods vs Ginebra

CAN Mobiline and Barangay Ginebra pull off upsets or Shell Velocity and Purefoods stand their ground?

Answers will be known today when the four teams jam it up in two winner-take-all matches in the PBA All-Filipino Cup quarterfinals at Philsports.

Winners today will advance to the next round and face each other in the best-of-five semifinals.

The Phone Pals and the Gin Kings managed to put the quarterfinal pairings on even terms by winning over the Turbochargers and the Hotdogs, respectively, last Sunday.

The twin victories also set a trend of sorts as twice-to-beat teams like San Miguel Beer and Pop Cola also fell to Batang Red Bull and Alaska Milk last Wednesday.

But it shouldn't be the case, if you ask Shell coach Perry Ronquillo, who slammed his team's half-hearted stand against the Phone Pals.

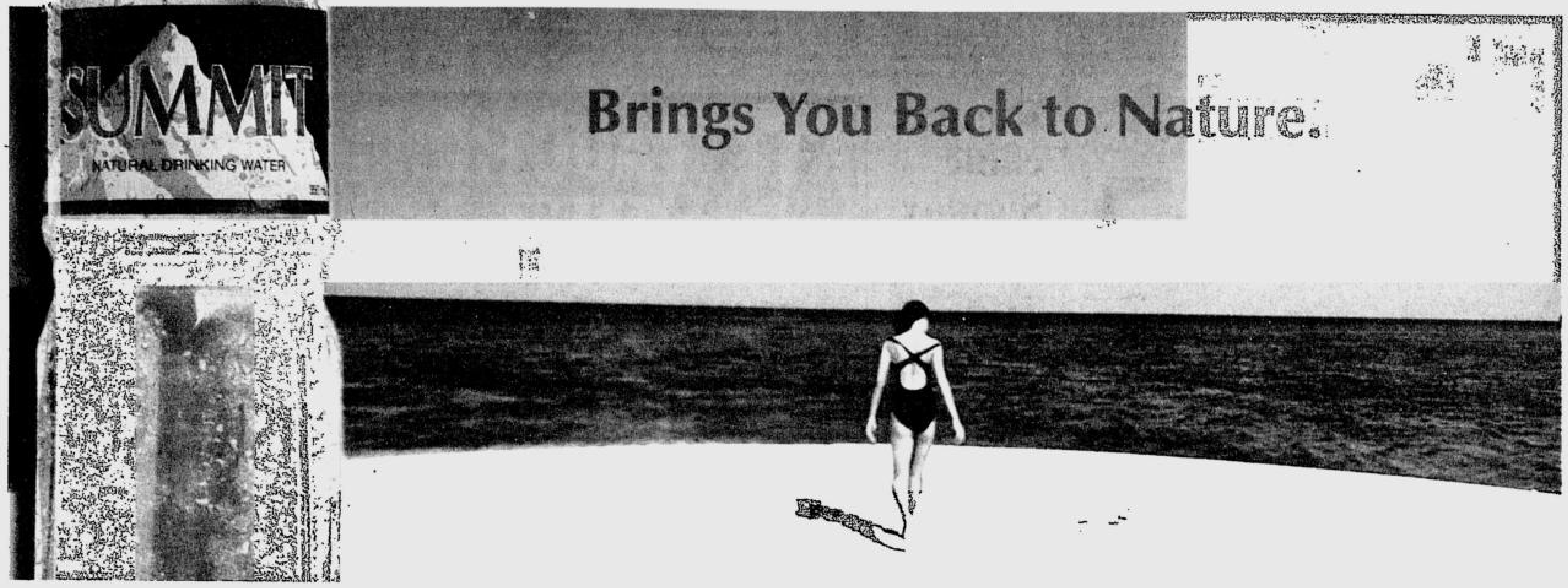
He had the right to be mad considering that it was the first game the Turbochargers showed up in full force after bouts of injuries.

Also, Shell is now on a three-game losing streak right after lording it over the elimination round, besting even league favorite SMB.

Meanwhile, PBA commissioner Jun Bernardino said the league is not about to revert to the zone defense amid the NBA's sensational rule change.

Denying reports (not by the Inquirer) that the PBA is giving up the man-to-man defense, Bernardino said it would take long deliberations from the board of governors for it to take effect.

Though Bernardino didn't state the reason for stopping the PBA from re-implementing zone defense, it was perceived that doing so would slow down the action and further trim down the scoring.



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Vendor gets life for raping ex-OCW

By Philip C. Tubeza

THE QUEZON City Regional Trial Court sentenced to life imprisonment a cigarette vendor found guilty of robbing and raping a former overseas contract worker.

Rodrigo V. Luna, 34, of 41 Everlasting St. Green Heights, Newton, Antipolo City, was found guilty of robbing the woman of P500 and then abusing her on the night of June 26, 2000 by the perimeter wall of Camp Aguinaldo along Edsa.

Branch 219 Judge Jose Catral Mendoza also ordered Luna to pay the victim P75,500 in damages and to shoulder the cost of the litigation.

Court records showed that the former contract worker was walking along Edsa in front of Camp Crame when Luna waylaid her around 10:45 p.m.

Luna suddenly appeared from behind and pointed a fan knife at her. He forced her to surrender her wallet, which contained the P500.

But Luna was not contented with just taking her money. He dragged her across the road to a dark portion of the perimeter wall of Camp Aguinaldo.

Luna, still pointing the knife at her,

VENDOR/ A26

- Woman's torso floats in Pasig River A26
- Bare Eye: It's fiesta time for the Pinoy boxing fan A26

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BABIES ON BOARD
Newborns and their mothers and caregivers are among the first to be rescued as two fires break out at the Philippine General Hospital on Taft Avenue in Manila. ERIK ARAZAS

Suspects in QC beheading slip through dragnet

By Philip C. Tubeza

POLICEMEN from the Central Police District (CPD) yesterday failed to bag the suspects in the beheading of three young men whose bodies were found in Quezon City on Monday.

But Senior Insp. Rudy Jaraza, CPD Criminal Investigation Unit-homicide section chief, said the case would be solved today.

"They slipped through our dragnet," Jaraza said. "But don't worry. By tomorrow, everything will be made clear."

He said he also expected two of the victims to be identified by their parents last night.

"I already sent my men to fetch the people whom we think are the parents of these two victims," Jaraza said.

He said the two unidentified victims were residents of the vicinity of Barangay Culiat, Quezon City.

One of the unidentified victims was described as 18 to 20 years old, 5-foot-3, with a tattoo on the right side of the body. The other was 12-15 years old, five feet, and slim.

The victims also had ligature marks on their necks, near their collarbones, according to the report of the Scene of the Crime Operations (Soco) team.

One victim, New Era public school student Kenny Azana, 16, of 266 Sto. Domingo St. Barangay Batasan Hills, Quezon City, was identified by his relatives on Tuesday. Azana was last seen alive in the afternoon of April 10 playing computer games at the Peralta computer shop.

A motorist found the headless bodies of Azana and the two other youths on Mindanao Avenue in Novaliches, Quezon City on April 16.

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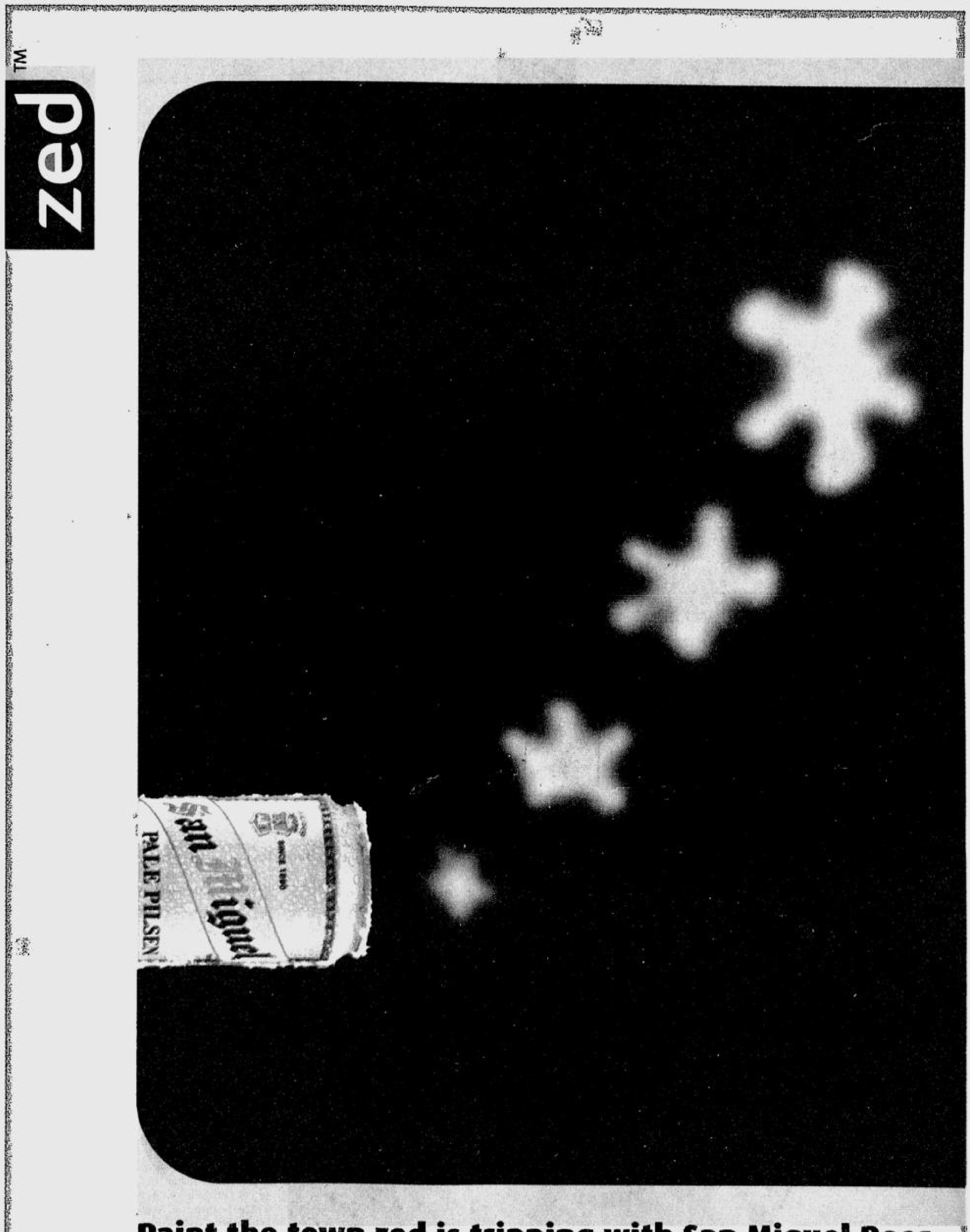

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Woman's torso floats in Pasig river

By Jerome Aning

A WOMAN'S torso was found in the Pasig River in Quiapo, Manila early yesterday morning.

The woman's arms had been hacked off, police said. The torso was in a black plastic bag that residents found floating near the river bank along Muelle de la Quinta Street around 8 a.m.

The residents, who suspected that the foul-smelling and fly-infested bag might contain a human body, called police.

SPO2 Athos de Quiros of the Western Police District homicide section said the bag was tightly tied with a yellow nylon cord.

The torso was cut into three parts, with the internal organs also stuffed inside the bag, De Quiros said.

The torso was still in a black bra, blue-gray striped shirt and beige panties. A pair of rubber slippers and ladies' sandals were also found inside the bag.

The area where the body was found is near the part of the river that converges with the Estero de Quiapo, where the Department of Public Works and Highways maintains a pumping station.

The place is a favorite dumping ground of women believed to be "salvage" victims. Last year, the bodies of at least five women were found in the river.

Investigators theorized that the woman were couriers and agents of drug syndicates operating at the Islamic Center in Quiapo and nearby areas. The victims could have been liquidated to prevent them from squealing, they added.

The body parts found yesterday were brought to the Funeraria Tres Amigos in Paco.

Police have called on residents who may have witnessed the throwing of the body to come out and help them solve the jigsaw murder. *With reports from Jeusa Raflores and Myla Torres*

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It's fiesta time for the Pinoy boxing fan

BARE EYE

Recah Trinidad

BOXING fans, including those who mistake me for the referee Sonny Padilla, never fail to ask about the big fight schedule.

You bump into this action-hungry people everywhere. On the sidewalk, in the village *talipapa*, outside factory premises, in church after Sunday Mass. Just about everywhere, and some wonder why I have not been working bouts in Las Vegas.

I can't offer excuses for my friend, Sonny the referee, who had the misfortune of looking a bit like me.

Well, truth is, we're in for a very busy stretch. One full month, meaning four successive weekends, of world-class boxing.

Come Sunday noon, it will be Lennox Lewis defending his world heavyweight crown against Hashim Rahman. This will be shown on IBC-13.

The following week, Manny Pacquiao stakes his WBC international junior featherweight title against a Thai fighter. The date is April 28. The site: Kidapawan in Cotabato province. The host, Gov. Manny Piñol, has promised to beam the fight via satellite over PTV-4 on the same day.

Then on May 5, Gerry Peñalosa will also defend his WBC super flyweight crown against a Japanese foe at the Araneta Coliseum. The event will be carried by IBC-13 on a slightly delayed basis.

Then, to complete a full month of big-time boxing, meaning four successive weekends of fine ring action, the sensational Felix Trinidad sees action on May 13. He goes up a notch higher and fights for the WBC middleweight crown.

***

I'm not too familiar with the figure Trinidad would be fighting.

Boxing scholar Hermie Rivera, who will anchor the presentation over RPN-9, named Tito Trinidad's opponent as William Joppy. Or is it Joppi?

Sorry, I have no way of checking at the moment. I've been stranded here in Alabang.

But whether it's Hoppi or Jalopy, Hermie says what greatly intrigues him now is this latest announcement from the Trinidad camp.

Mr. Rivera, who celebrated his birthday and claimed to have turned a year younger on April 16, said Trinidad, considered the finest pound-for-pound ring artist in the world today, aims to grow into a full-fledged light heavyweight, 175 pounds. You know, to challenge the fabled Roy Jones Jr. who, by the way, also lays claim to the Best-Pound-For-Pound world crown.

If Trinidad succeeds in his next outing, and there's no way he should not, that expected clash with Roy Jones Jr. would not only rival, but in fact overshadow, the still doubtful Mike Tyson-Lennox Lewis fight.

***

The two foreign offerings involving Lewis and Trinidad will definitely generate the greater interest hereabouts.

Just the same, Peñalosa's outing at the Big Dome is of utmost importance. A win on May 5 would again set up Gerry Boy for a crack at the WBC 115-pound crown which he had lost to Korean run-run artist In Jo-Cho.

You see, there's this popular belief that Peñalosa is the finest in his division.

I have no way of disputing that. In his last title challenge against In Jo Cho, who had earlier run away with his WBC diadem, Gerry boxed a masterful bout. He looked every inch the winner.

Our boy was clearly robbed. He won practically all the rounds and the gutless Korean beanpole could hardly believe that he had retained his crown on a split decision.

As for Pacquiao, easily the hottest Pinoy boxer today, his handlers have been saying he could next be lined up for a world crown if he succeeds in his appointment in Kidapawan on April 28.

Both Peñalosa and Pacquiao are heavily favored.

There is, however, an outside chance either Lewis or Trinidad could be upset.

One thing is sure, though. Any which way the four big events go, restless Pinoy fight fans, some of whom must've been wondering why Sonny Padilla also writes a column here, are already assured of a big, big win.

Four successive weeks of great boxing, with all the cards carried on local television, has never happened here before. There indeed is a big boxing fiesta in town. Watch all you can.

Vendor gets life for rape

(From page A25)

warned her to keep quiet while he removed her pants and underwear and then proceeded to rape her.

The woman said she tried to resist but Luna pushed her against the wall and then made her lie on the grass. Luna kept the knife pointed at her while he satisfied his lust, she said.

She said that when she tried to break free from his clutches, he told her in Filipino, "Just try, no one will see you."

The woman said she tried to escape again and was able to free herself. She then kicked Luna's sex organ, she said.

She ran across Edsa and sought the help of policemen at Gate 1 of Camp Crame.

The policemen were able to arrest Luna.

A medicolegal examination later confirmed that the woman had been raped.

Tribute to Dacer

SALVADOR "Bubby" Dacer," one of the country's prominent PR men, will be given a tribute in a memorial service tomorrow at the Santuario de San Antonio in Forbes Park.

Key personalities from government, business and the media will give their reflections on Bubby. Expected to attend are his close friends, former clients and colleagues in the profession.

The program's highlights include an audio-visual presentation on Bubby's life, and a call for truth and justice by people who knew Bubby.

Those who would like to attend the rites may call the Dacer family's official representative, Ms Cathy Salceda, at 0917-466-1411.

Dayrit address UP grads

HEALTH Secretary Manuel Dayrit will address about 1,000 graduates of the University of the Philippines Manila today at the PICC Plenary Hall.

Dayrit is a graduate of the UP Manila College of Medicine batch 1976 and has a Master of Science degree (Mark of Distinction) from the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine. He specializes in various fields such as public health, infectious and tropical diseases, primary health care, health planning, health communications and managed care.

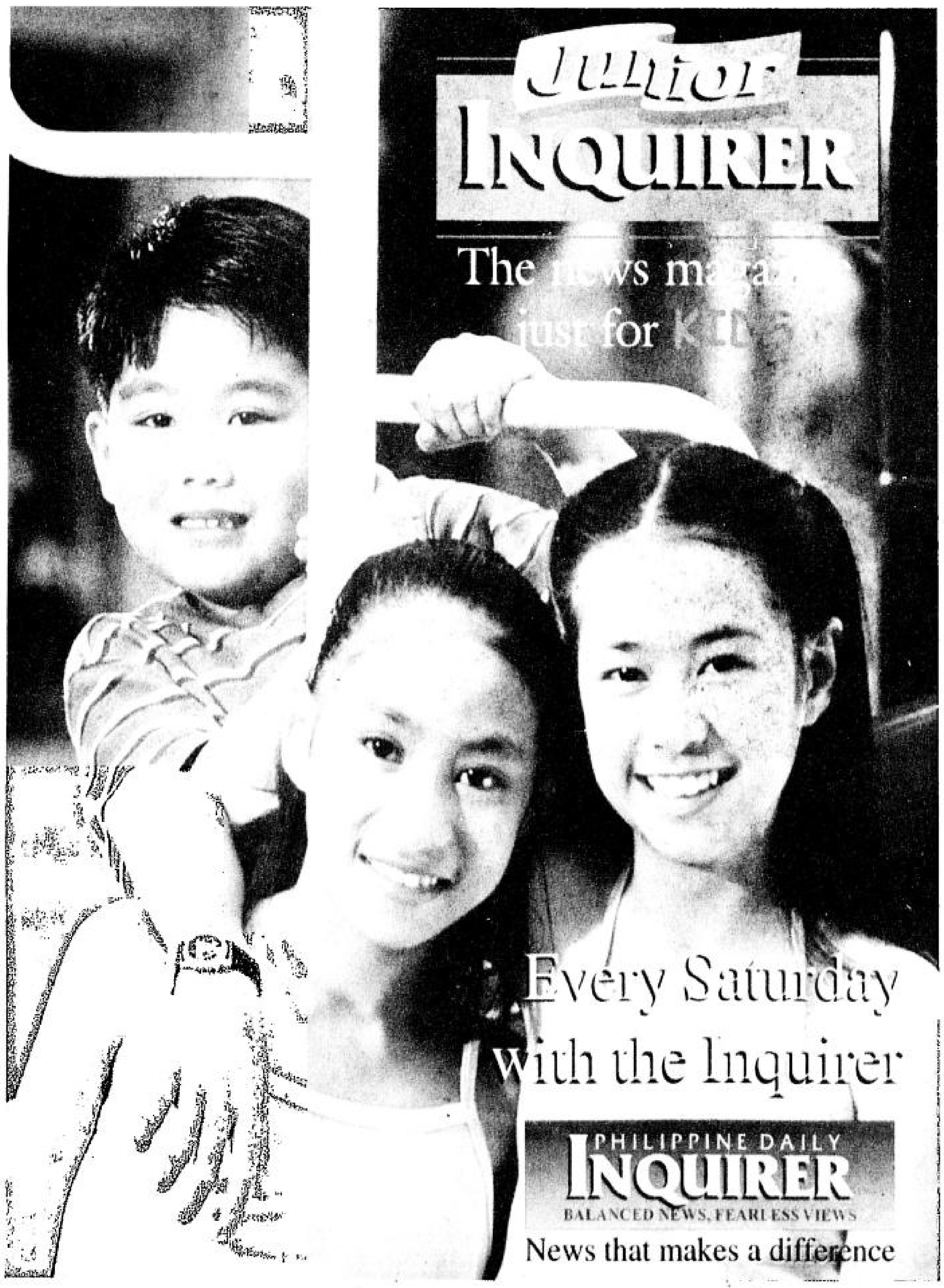
In the same rite, Dr. Benjamin Rigor, a graduate of Public Hygiene from the Institute of Public Hygiene (now College of Public Health) and a medical alumnus of the University of the East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center, will be conferred a Doctor of Laws (honoris causa) degree. Rigor is the founding chair of the Department of Anesthesiology, New Jersey Medical School and was professor and chair of the same department at the University of Louisville Health Sciences Center, Kentucky where he is now emeritus chair.

Optometrists convention

THE OPTOMETRIC Association of the Philippines will hold its 53rd national convention in Caliraya, Laguna on April 21 and 22 with the theme "A Vision for Better Times."

To be discussed are the childhood blindness program and the child sight program. Dr. Edgardo Caparas will talk on the delivery of health care to the rural areas.

The officers are Dr. Joy del Norte, president; Dr. Janice Marie Diez, vice president; Dr. Lourdes Javier, secretary; and Dr. Christina Sarabia, treasurer. Convention chair is Dr. Menchie Abesamis-Dichoso.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News that makes a difference

Fires hit 2 PGH wards

By Jerome Aning

MORE than a hundred patients, visitors and employees were evacuated after two fires swept briefly through two wards of the Philippine General Hospital in Ermita, Manila yesterday morning.

But no one was reported injured, and the wards were only partially damaged.

SFO4 Danilo Talusan of the city fire department said the first fire began at 9:28 a.m. in an empty locker room on the second floor of Ward 6, which houses the neurosurgical unit.

Employees who noticed the smoke coming from the ceiling took fire extinguishers and were able to put out the flames after 13 minutes.

About a dozen patients from the ward were moved to other surgery units.

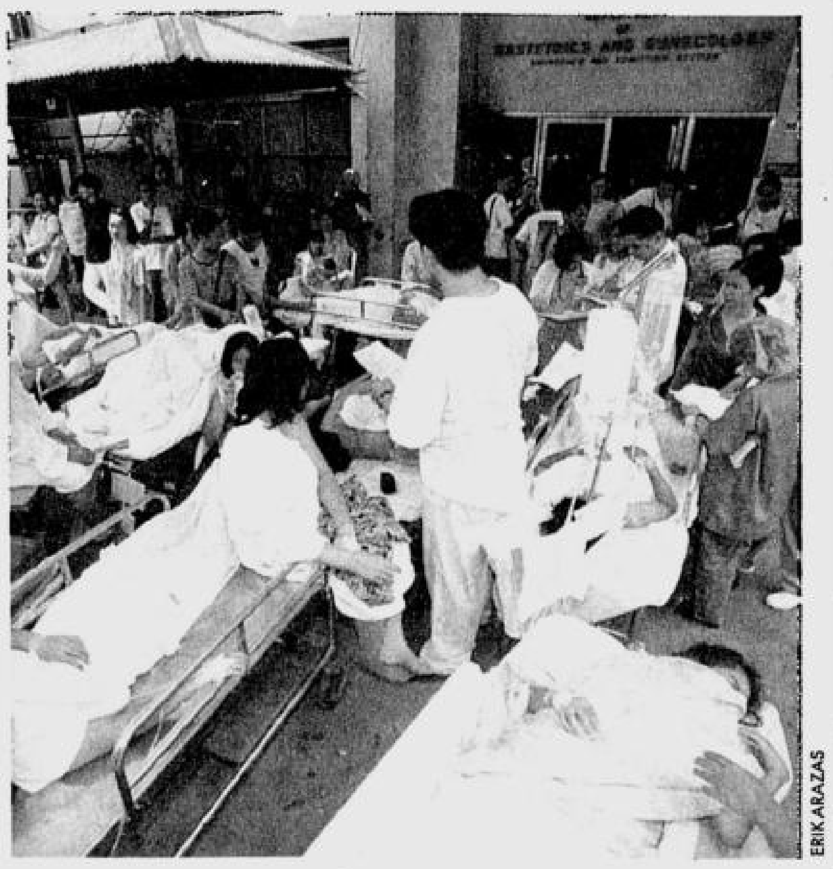
The second blaze began at 11:43 a.m. in the linen stock room on the ground floor of Ward 15, which houses the obstetrician-gynecology section and the infectious disease service of the government-run hospital, according to Talusan.

Firemen called to investigate the first fire radioed nearby fire stations for reinforcements to put out the new blaze, which lasted for an hour and eight minutes.

Hospital staff evacuated about 150 women patients who had just given birth or were about to give birth from the ward to an alley under the shade. They were later transferred to other buildings.

The two wards are located in two three-story buildings on the northern part of the PGH complex near Padre Faura Street.

Fire investigators believe a faulty electrical circuit triggered the twin blaze. They have asked the PGH's engineering department to inspect the electric circuitry of the complex.



ERIK ARAZAS

HUNDREDS of patients, mostly pregnant women, were evacuated from the Philippine General Hospital after a fire broke out at ward 15.

2 women rapped for selling girl, 16, to flesh traders

By Agnes Donato

TWO WOMEN were charged yesterday before the Pasig Regional Trial Court for allegedly selling a 16-year-old girl to a prostitution den in Laoag City.

The suspects were identified as Erlinda Natividad, 52, and Charito Macarandang, 31, both residents of Barangay 117, Camarin II, Caloocan City.

Police acted on a complaint lodged by the girl's mother and arrested the two women on April 9.

The mother told the authorities that the two women forced her daughter to work at a bar in a Laoag beach resort, which also happened to be a prostitution den.

Police said that on March 26, the two women approached the girl, a resident of Barangay Western Bicutan, Taguig, and offered her a three-day job with a salary of P5,000 in Laoag, Ilocos Sur.

But the women reportedly told the girl that she must not tell or ask permission from her mother or her stepfather.

The girl agreed to take the job and was given P500 to buy new clothes, court records showed.

But after three days, the girl was not returned to her family. This prompted the girl's mother to go to a friend of her daughter's, who happened to be a relative of the suspect Macarandang, and asked her the whereabouts of the girl.

The mother was referred to Macarandang, who promised her that the girl would be returned on April 9.

But Macarandang failed to fulfill her promise, so the mother went to the police, lodged a complaint and had the suspect and her cohort arrested.

State prosecutor Jose Danilo Jabson recommended bail of P200,000 for each suspect.

With reports from Nickson Ryan Matias and Pamela Jill Flores

THE DAILY GOSPEL

Friday, April 20, 2001
Octave of Easter

1st Reading: Acts 4:1-12
Gospel: Jn 21-1-14

Jesus revealed himself to the disciples by the Lake of Tiberias. He appeared to them in this way. Simon Peter, Thomas who was called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee and two other disciples were together; and Simon Peter said to them, "I'm going fishing." They replied, "We will come with you" and they went out and got into the boat. But they caught nothing that night.

When day had already broken, Jesus was standing on the shore, but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus called them, "Children, have you anything to eat?" They answered, "Nothing." Then he said to them, "Throw the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they had lowered the net, they were not able to pull it in because of the great number of fish.

Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" At these words, "It's the Lord," Simon Peter put on his clothes, for he was stripped for work, and jumped into the water. The other disciples came in the boat dragging the net full of fish; they were not far from land, about a hundred meters.

When they landed, they saw a charcoal fire with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you've just caught." So Simon Peter climbed into the boat and pulled the net to shore. It was full of big fish—one hundred and fifty-three—but, in spite of this, the net was not torn.

Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast," and not one of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" for they knew it was the Lord. Jesus then came and took the bread and gave it to them, and he did the same with the fish.

This was the third time that Jesus revealed himself to his disciples after rising from the dead.

Commentary:

The Fourth Evangelist brings us thither whence it all started for the apostolic community—Galilee by the lake of Tiberias. Practically they had all fallen away from being disciples of Jesus. They were in their old trade—fishing. Their faith in the Risen Lord had to be confirmed. It is noteworthy that Jesus in this "second" calling of the seven disciples addressed them "children." For, if before the events took place they relied more on themselves, now they must have learned to be as children before the good news of God's reign: the Lord is unconditional love in the crucified Jesus, now raised up from the dead. Some of us Christian believers need to experience first a serious fall before we see that good news. In whichever case, the Lord calls us all to be in communion with him and one another as his community.

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SUPREME COURT DOCTRINES

CRIMINAL LAW (AGGRAVATING CIRCUMSTANCES)—Elements of evidence premeditation—For evident premeditation to exist, the prosecution must prove with clear and convincing evidence the following elements: (1) the time when the offenders decided to commit the crime; (2) an act manifestly indicating that the culprit has clung to his determination; and 93) sufficient lapse of time between the determination and execution to allow them to reflect upon the consequences of their act and allow their conscience to overcome the resolution of their will. Evident premeditation is inherent in crimes against property, but it may be considered in robbery with homicide if there is premeditation to kill besides stealing. [Citations omitted.] [En Banc, Justice Quisumbing, People v. Cando, G.R. No. 128114, October 25, 2000]

Digest by R.B. Vera

Comelec set to rule on canvass venues for Mandaluyong, Manila

By Gerald Lacuarta and Jerome Aning

COMELEC Commissioner Rex Borra yesterday said the poll body would most likely grant the request for transfer of venue in the canvassing of votes in the cities of Mandaluyong and Manila, in response to petitions filed by candidates against their incumbent opponents.

"Where the place is limited in terms of space, it is preferable to transfer the venue to a bigger, more spacious, but safe canvassing center, so there would be transparency in the proceedings," Borra said.

In Manila, mayoral candidates Amado Bagatsing of the People Power Coalition and Alfredo Lim of the KKK party have asked the Commission on Elections to move the venue from city hall to the Ninoy Aquino Memorial Stadium on Pablo Ocampo Sr. Street to prevent "*dagdag-bawas*" (vote-padding and -shaving) and other forms of cheating.

Mandaluyong mayoral candidate Bibot Domingo and congressional candidate Angie Buan also petitioned the poll body to transfer the canvassing of votes from the city gymnasium to the National Center for Mental Health.

But a Manila elections officer on Wednesday said transportation and security concerns must be first addressed before the Comelec goes ahead with the plan to transfer the venue for the canvassing of votes in Manila.

In an interview, lawyer Lea Alarkon, elections officer of District 5, said the poll body should act soon on the request of the venue transfer so that she and the other five elections officers and their staff could prepare.

Borra said a bigger canvassing center in both cities would ensure that all poll watchers of political parties would be able to monitor the proceedings.

Domingo, in a letter to Mandaluyong election officer Mary Ann Lacuesma, said his poll watchers were unfairly treated during the 1998 elections because canvassing was held "within the sphere of control and influence of the incumbent administration" at the city gym inside the city hall compound.

Vendor killed for trying to break up fight over Erap

A TAGUIG vendor was killed on Wednesday night when he tried to stop his drinking mates from fighting over whether or not deposed President Estrada should be jailed.

Raphael Cruz, of Block 80, Lot 40, Purok 6, Upper Bicutan, Taguig, was stabbed dead by Mario Bonila, 20, of Block 96, Lot 11 also of Purok 6, police said.

Cruz and Bonila were drinking with three of their friends on Goyena Street in Purok 6 at about 9 p.m. Wednesday when Bonila started the argument over Estrada's incarceration.

When the two men stood up for a brawl, Cruz stepped in and tried to pacify them. But Bonila turned his anger on Cruz and stabbed him in the right side of the chest.

The victim died on the spot while barangay watchmen caught the suspect as he tried to flee.

In Manila, a 48-year-old security guard shot dead an unidentified man who attacked him with a bolo in Ermita, Manila yesterday morning.

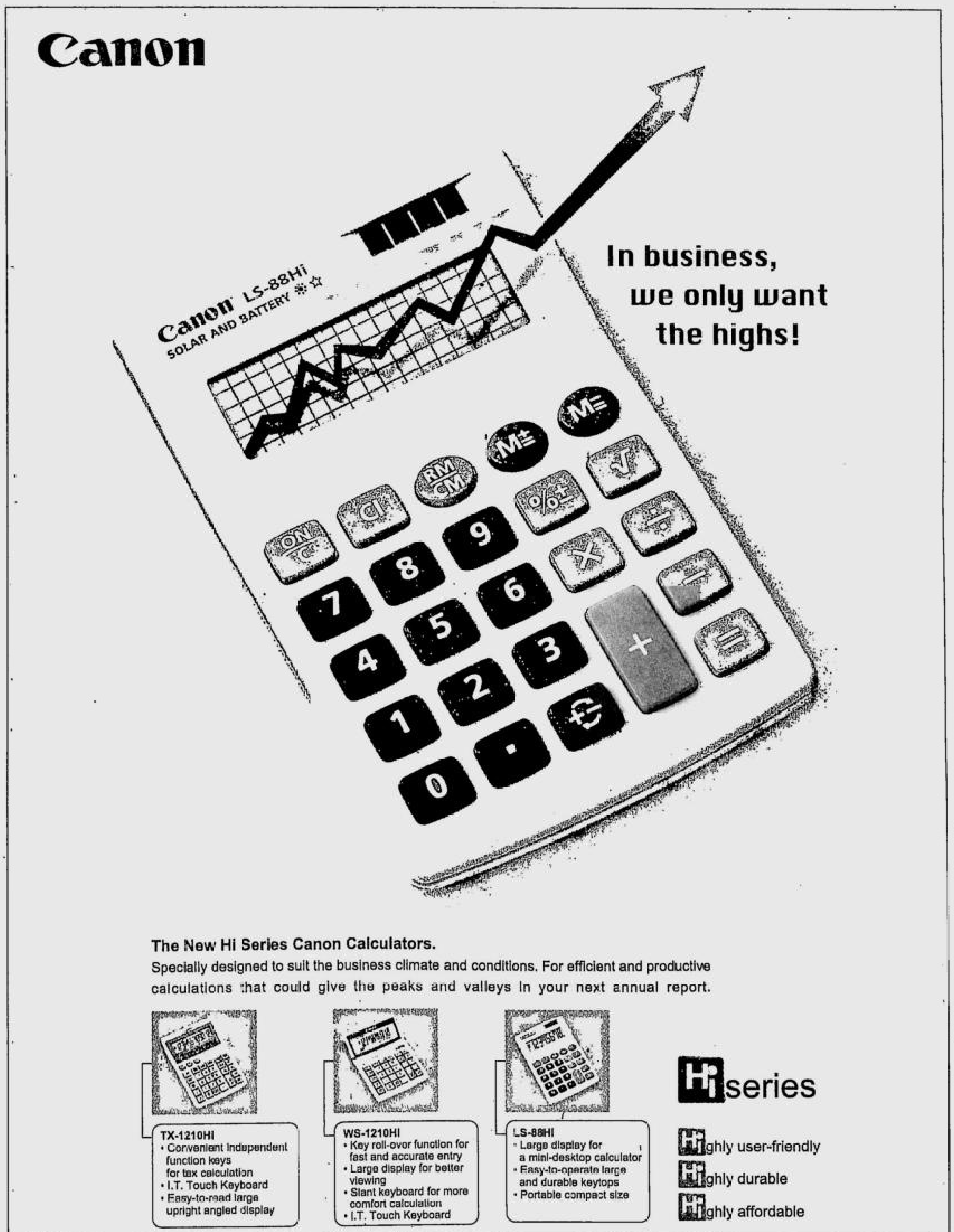
Reynaldo Buela, an employee of the Philippine Scout Veterans Security Investigation Agency Inc., was seriously injured in the bolo attack and was taken to the Philippine General Hospital, police said.

Buela told police that the man attacked him while he was on duty at the front desk of the Astral Tower at the corner of Taft Avenue and Padre Faura Street at about 4 a.m.

Though wounded in the arms, Buela was able to draw his .38-caliber service revolver and shot the man on the chest, killing him on the spot.

SPO1 David Tuazon said the man who attacked the guard was about 50-57 years old, about 5-foot-5, slim and fair complexioned. He was also wearing eyeglasses, printed polo shirt, black pants and leather slippers.

His body was taken to the Tres Amigos Funeral Parlor in Paco. *With reports from Alcuin Papa, Jerome Aning, with Roy Jolito, Jojo Arazas and Carina Roncesvalles*



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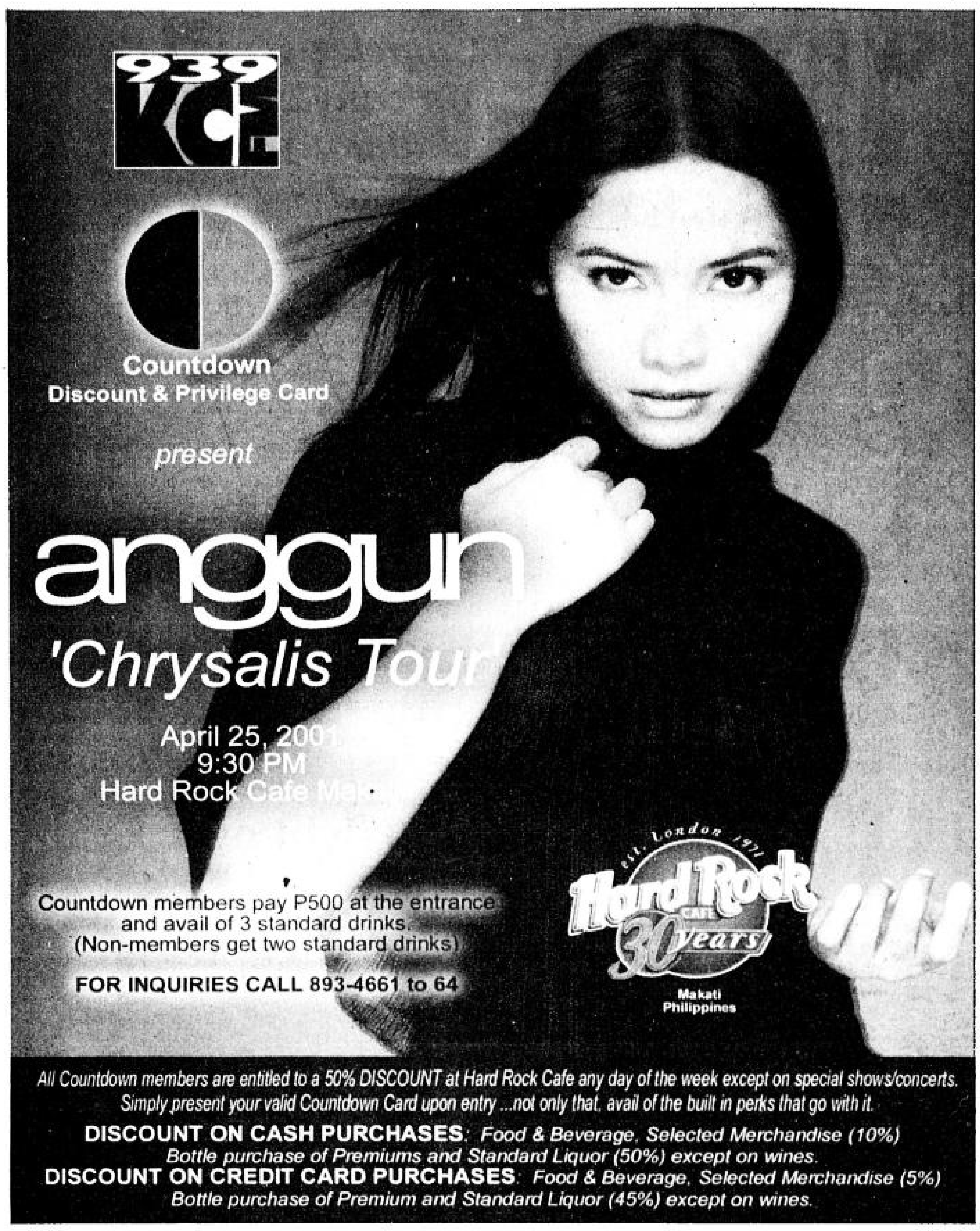
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VIEWFINDER

Nestor U. Torre

HOST: Thus far, our guests tonight have confessed that they resorted to burning houses, making *saksak* and poisoning with rat killer to get back at their enemies. *Tanungin naman natin ngayon ang ating* expert: *'Yan ba ang* normal?

(Obvious *ba? Hindi!)*

* * *

Host: How do you describe your good friend? What do you admire in him?

Guest: More than anything else, workaholic *siya—lalo na* when it comes to *trabaho!*

(E, di kasi naman!)

* * *

Host: *Ano na ang* latest *sa* shooting incident *diyan*?

Field Reporter: *Dinala na ang mga bangkay ng mga* victims *sa ospital, para mabigyan ng* medical attention!

(Huh?!)

* * *

Host: Before we finish the show, what final words can you say to the voters who are listening?

Politician: *Iboto niyo ako sa darating na lalawigan*!

(Ay, mali!)

* * *

Host: What happened at the presscon?

Field Reporter: The speakers reminded people that the third People Power revolution might not be far behind if there is no good governance.

(No, far ahead!)

* * *

Host: *Sino ang iboboto niyo bilang senador*?

Respondent: *Si* **Ralph Recto.**

Host: *At bakit?*

Respondent: *Kasi, asawa siya ni* **Vilma Santos.**

(Uh-oh . . .)

* * *

Host: Do you think the Abu Sayyaf will make good on its threat to behead **Schilling**?

Cohost: I don't think so.

Host: Why not?

Cohost: Because they just keep threatening, but usually don't carry it out. The Abu Sayyaf always threatens to behead the heads of its hostages!

(Duh . . .)

* * *

Host: What is your favorite food?

Guest: Japanese.

Host: What dish, in particular?

Guest: Ah, wait, I'll think . . .

Host: Anything—just anything that comes to mind?

Guest: 'Ah . . . temporary . . . temporary shrimp!

(Temporary shrimp?—Ah, shrimp tempura!)

Feedback

FROM **Romina O. Mallari** of Makati City: "I've been trying hard to understand the issues in the ongoing debate betweep artistic freedom and responsible filmmaking, but it hasn't been easy. Emotions and tempers are just too high on both sides to make the debate clear to ordinary bystanders like me.

"I wish the two sides would really listen to each other and talk without screaming and attacking each other. Only then can we see which side makes better sense . . ."

Grammy awards

THE ANNUAL Grammy awards show will be telecast at 9 p.m. on April 21 and 28 on ABC-5. Nine-time Grammy winner **Tony Bennett** will be presenting the show with **Gloria Estefan**, and he will also be getting a Lifetime Achievement award this year.

Multiple nominees in the 43rd edition of the Grammys include **Dr. Dre** and **Beyonce Knowles** of Destiny's Child, who got five nods each; **Eminem, Sisqo, Vince Gill, Joe, Rodney Jerkins,** Destiny's Child (**Le Toya Luckett, LaTavia Roberson, Kelendria Rowland**), producer **LaShawn Daniels** and arranger/conductor **Vince Mendoza** (four nominations apiece).

Also nominated are **Faith Hill, Steely Dan,** N' Sync, **Sheryl Crow,** Foo Fighters' **Dave Grohl, Macy Gray** and **Don Henley**. For her part, Gloria Estefan has been nominated for Best Traditional Tropical Latin Album ("Alma Caribena"). **Christina Aguillera, Carlos Santana, Erykah Badu** and **Roy Romano** will also appear on the awards show.

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Manilyn once more

By Remy M. Umerez

A NEW Manilyn Reynes has resurfaced with the release of her new album, "Once More," from Ivory records.

The record company has revived her singing career. After all, it was also Ivory that launched Manilyn's album, "Apple Thoughts,". when she was just a teener. Two more albums followed, ``Manilyn Christmas" and "Triplet," with best friends Sheryl Cruz and Tina Paner.

For one who believes that she owes the public to look good all the time, Manilyn took the challenge of losing excess pounds, the same way Sharon did after she got pregnant. From 140 pounds, she trimmed down to a sleek 100. Her waistline is down to a tight 23 inches.

She admits it wasn't an easy task to do.

"It requires exercise, hard work, discipline and sacrifice," says Manilyn, who is now a photographer's delight.

"If I have to make a comeback, I need to look great," she says. "I feel great now. I can move around without panting. If only they know how hurtful it was to hear people remark, '*ay*, Manilyn is so fat' when they see me doing the groceries. I dislike negative things and unkind people."

Singing has always been Manilyn's big love. She treats it like a hobby, which she is addicted to, the same way she loves to cross stitch, draw or paint furniture.

She admits missing singing before a live audience.

"I always enjoy making people happy through music. I miss their smiles and their cheers and screams. It feels good and fulfilling when they ask you to sing more for them."

"Once More" is a compilation of original compositions and revivals that depicts life and love. The ten-track album is co-produced by Margot and Edith Gallardo, Snaffu Rigor, Ferdie Marquez, Cesar Aguas and May Ortiz.

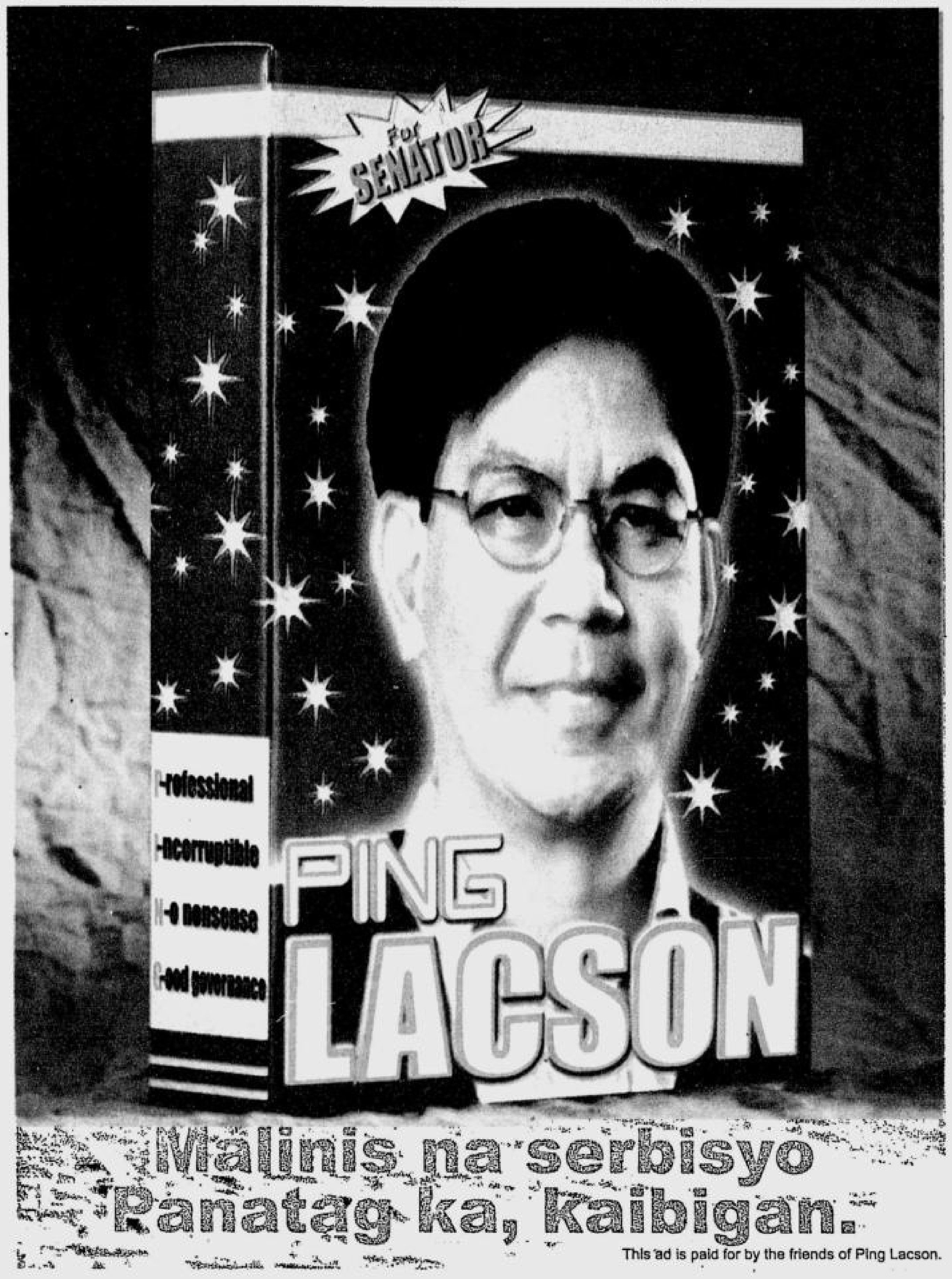
Original cuts include the potential hit "Sinusuyo, Niyayakap." A new entry, worth looking forward to is "Kulang Pa Ba" by Ogie Alcasid.

Revival songs include "What's Forever More" (where Reynes did all the back-up vocals herself), "You To Me Are Everything," an original by Real Thing and "Where Did Our Love Go" made popular by Rico J. Puno in the early 70s.

Manilyn feels privileged to come out with a new version of "Minsan, Minsan" but is humble enough to admit nothing can equal the original version popularized by Claire dela Fuente.

Manilyn dedicates the album to her family, husband Aljohn and son Kyle, and to her fans who've always been around and has been her source of inspiration.

REYNES. To look good requires exercise, hard work, discipline and sacrifice.



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4	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CROW
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	DOUBLE TAKE
6	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MADERASO
7	DOLBY SURROUND	ANTI-TRUST
8	DOLBY SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
9	DOLBY SURROUND	RUGRATS
10	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE

SM CITY FAIRVIEW 9350749

1	DOLBY SURROUND	OOOPS, TEKA LANG
2	DOLBY SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE
3	DOLBY SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
4	DOLBY DIGITAL	RUGRATS
5	DOLBY SURROUND	ABAKADA ... INA
6	DOLBY SURROUND	MADERASO
7	DOLBY DIGITAL	SWEET NOVEMBER
8	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CROW
9	DOLBY SURROUND	ANTI-TRUST
10	DOLBY SURROUND	DOULBLE TAKE
11	DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
12	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER

SM CITY MANILA 5239240

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	ANTI-TRUSRT
2	DOLBY DIGITAL	DOUBLE TAKE
3	DOLBY SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE
4	DOLBY SURROUND	SWEET NOVEMBER
5	DOLBY DIGITAL	RUGRATS
6	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
7	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
8	DOLBY SURROUND	THE SEDUCER
9	DOLBY SURROUND	ABAKADA ... INA
10	DOLBY SURROUND	DRACULA 2000
11	DOLBY SURROUND	AIR BUD 3
12	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CROW

GUADALUPE COMM'L CTR 8820950

1	ULTRA SURROUND	HAPDI NG TAG-INIT
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE CROW

SM MEGAMALL 6331901 • 6329401

1	DOLBY DIGITAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
3	DOLBY DIGITAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
4	DTS	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
5	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
6	DOLBY SURROUND	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
7	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
8	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	RUGRATS
9	DOLBY SURROUND	SWEET NOVEMBER
10	DOLBY SURROUND	ANTI-TRUST
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	DOUBLE TAKE
12	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE CROW

SM CITY NORTH EDSA 9295452

1	DOLBY SURROUND	THE CROW
2	DOLBY SURROUND	MADERASO
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	ABAKADA
4	DOLBY SURROUND	RUGRATS
5	DOLBY SURROUND	AIR BUD 3
6	DOLBY SURROUND	ANTI-TRUST
7	DTS	SWEET NOVEMBER
8	DOLBY DIGITAL	DOUBLE TAKE
9	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
10	DOLBY SURROUND	SEDUCER
11	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE
12	DOLBY SURROUND	CROUCHING TIGER

SM SOUTHMALL 8066088 • 8066762

1	ULTRA SURROUND	RUGRATS
2	ULTRA SURROUND	ANTI-TRUST
3	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	SWEET NOVMEBER
4	ULTRA SURROUND	ABAKADA INA
5	ULTRA SURROUND	MADERASO
6	ULTRA SURROUND	ATTACK FORCE
7	ULTRA SURROUND	THE CROW
8	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
9	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSE FOR RENOVATION
10	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSE FOR RENOVATION

TUTUBAN CENTER 2514302

1	ULTRA SURROUND	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
2	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	THE CROW
3	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	MADERASO
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	ABAKADA ... INA

SM CEBU 2313876

1	DOLBY SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
2	ULTRA SURROUND	GLADIATOR
3	ULTRA SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
4	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY
5	ULTRA SURROUND	UHAW SA INIT
6	ULTRA SURROUND	RUGRATS
7	DOLBY SURROUND	BAIT

SM ILOILO 3209422

1	ULTRA SURROUND	TOTAL AIKIDO
2	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
3	ULTRA SURROUND	BAIT
4	ULTRA SURROUND	WEDDING PLANNER
5	ULTRA SURROUND	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
6	ULTRA SURROUND	RUGRATS
7	ULTRA SURROUND	CLOSED
8	ULTRA SURROUND	MS. CONGENIALITY

SM PAMPANGA 7128015

1	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	RUGRATS
2	DOLBY DIGITAL EX	CHOCOLAT
3	DOLBY SURROUND	THEY NEST
4	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	AIR BUD-3
5	SYNTHESIZED SURROUND	UHAW SA INIT
6	DOLBY SURROUND	ABAKADA ... INA

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3	THE CROW: SALVATION
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GLORIETTA 4 (All Digital Sound)

1	RUGRATS IN PARIS In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
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3	SWEET NOVEMBER THX In DSD/SDDS/DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	CROUCHING TIGER, HIDDEN DRAGON In DTS DIGITAL SOUND Art Film
5	DOUBLE TAKE In DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
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1	SWEET NOVEMBER THX In DSD/SDDS DIGITAL SOUND
2	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND In DSD DOLBY DIGITAL SOUND
3	RUGRATS IN PARIS In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
4	ANTI - TRUST In DTS DIGITAL SOUND
5	DOUBLE TAKE In DTS DIGITAL SOUND

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MOVIE GUIDE
NOW SHOWING

Filinvest FESTIVAL CINEMA
(Muntinlupa) tel 850.3571 or 72

1 (DDS)	AIR BUD 3
2 (SDDS)	ANTI-TRUST
3 (DTS)	RUGRATS
4 GOLD (DTS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
5 GOLD (DOLBY)	GRACELAND
6 GOLD (SDDS)	THEY NEST
7 GOLD (DOLBY)	THE CROW
8	ATTACK FORCE
9	MADERASO
10	ABAKADA INA

Pearl Plaza Cinemas
(Parañaque) tel. 853.4486

1	EVANGELINE 14
2	ALIW MASARAP ANG LASON
3 (DTS)	
4	
5	
6 (DTS)	

Golden Pearl THX

Masagana CINEMAX 1-2 & 3
(Kalaw) tel 536.4315

1 (DOLBY)	SWEET NOVEMBER
2 (DTS)	RUGRATS
3	ABAKADA INA

Masagana CINEMA
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1	ABAKADA .. INA
2	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	MADERAZO

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1	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
2	ABAKADA ... INA
3	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	SWEET NOVEMBER
5	MADERAZO

Metropolis
(Alabang) tel 543.4001

1	MADERAZO
2	SEDUCER
3	ABAKADA ... INA
4	CLOSED
5	SWEET NOVEMBER
6	GLADIATOR
7	DI MAPPIGIL ANG INIT
8	THE CROW

Uniwide Metromall
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3	PORNOGRAPHER
4	NIGHT GATE
5	–
6	

Uniwide Coastal Mall
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2	FRIENDS AND LOVER
3	AUTUMN IN NEW YORK
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1	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
2	MS CONGENIALITY

FCM FAIRVIEW CENTER MALL, INC
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1	CLOSED
2	EVANGELINE 14
3	FAMILY MAN

Spring
(Libertad, Pasay City) tel 831.7864

1	DRACULA
A	EVANGELINE 14

JC Cinema
(Parañaque) tel 825.8626

1	CLOSED
3	CLOSED

GOTESCO CINEMA

City
(Manila) tel 734.8588

1 (DOLBY)	SWEET NOVEMBER
2	SEDUCER
3	ATTACK FORCE
4	MADERAZO
5	3000 MILES
6	ABAKADA INA
7 (DTS)	ANTI-TRUST
8 (SDDS)	DOUBLE TAKE
9 (DOLBY)	THE CROW

Caloocan
tel 362.3508

2	ABAKADA ... INA
3	RESERVE
4	RESERVE
5	
6	

Grand Central
(Caloocan) tel 364.3781

1	MADERAZO
2	ABAKADA INA
3	ATTACK FORCE
4 (SDDS)	3000 MILES
5	SEDUCER
6 (DOLBY)	THE CROW
7 (DTS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
8	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
9	OOOPS, TEKA LANG

Commonwealth
tel 951.0083

1 (DTS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
2	DOUBLE TAKE
3	ABAKADA INA
4	ANTI-TRUS
5 (SDDS)	3000 MILES
6	SEDUCER
7 (DOLBY)	THE CROW
8	MADERAZO

Ortigas
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1	ABAKADA INA
2	MADERAZO
3 (DTS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
4	3000 MILES
5 (SDDS)	SEDUCER
6 (DOLBY)	RESERVE
7 (DOLBY)	RESERVE

Universal
(Manila) tel 733.2470

1	ABAKADA INA

Sampaquita
(Cubao) tel 911.7888

1	ABAKADA INA

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2	ABAKADA INA
3	SWEET NOVEMBER
4	ATTACK FORCE

Prima
(Pasig) tel 641.1215

1	
3	MADERAZO

Super Cinerama
(Manila) tel 733.4226 or 733.4238

1	SWEET NOVEMBER
2	MADERAZO
3	ATTACK FORCE
4	ABAKADA INA
5	3000 MILES

Divisoria Mall
(Manila) tel 244.4560 or 244.4619

1	MADERAZO
2	ABAKADA...INA
3	EVANGELINE 14
4	PRODIGAL FIGHTER
5	ATTACK FORCE
6	3000 MILES

Baclaran LRT Cinema
tel 512.0115 or 512.0116

1	ABAKADA...INA
2	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
3	MADERAZO

CINEMA 2000

Cinema 2000 Target Mall
(Sta. Rosa Laguna) tel (049) 534.2185 / 534.2198

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	THE GIFT
3 (DTS)	ABAKADA INA

Cinema 2000 Waltermart
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7383

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2 (DTS)	RUGRATS
3 (DOLBY)	THEY NEST
4	ABAKADA INA

Lianas Cinema
(Alabang) tel 850.1276

1 (SDDS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
2	MADERAZO
3	RUGRATS
4 (DTS)	ABAKADA INA

Lianas MovieCity
(Calamba) tel (049) 545.7202

1 (DOLBY)	THEY NEST
2	ABAKADA INA
3 (DTS)	RUGRATS
4	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
5	ROARING LION REGENT DRAGON

Olivarez Tri-Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.8883

1	ABAKADA INA
2	RUGRATS
3	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Olivarez Los Baños
tel (049) 536.5101

1	ABAKADA INA
2	RUGRATS
3	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Olivarez Tagaytay
tel (046) 413.0311

1	GLADIATOR
2	BABAING PUTIK
3	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Morales Cinema
(Biñan) tel (049) 511.9736

1	THE GIFT
2	ABAKADA INA
3	RUGRATS

Sunshine
(FTI, Taguig) tel 838.4301 loc. 3376

1	ABAKADA INA
2	MADERAZO
3	DRACULA
4	EVANGELINE 14

Cabuyao
CINEMAS TEL (049) 5314806

1 (DTS)	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2 (DTS)	

Fourstep
(Cavite) tel (046) 416.2385

1	ABAKADA INA

Emperor
(Rosario Cavite) tel (046) 438.1657

1	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT
2	ABAKADA INA
3	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA

Fiesta World Mall
(Lipa) tel (043) 981.0790

1	THEY NEST
2	THE GIFT
3	QUILLS
4	DI MAPIGIL ANG INIT

Berma
tel 879.2168

1	ABAKADA.. INA
2	ALIW MASARAP ANG LASON

CitiMall
(Parañaque) tel 820.7269

1	RESERVE
2	MADERAZO
3	ABAKADA ..INA
4	PROOF OF LIFE

Jade Cinema
(Angeles City) tel (045) 887.5001 to 03

1 (DOLBY EX)	AIR BUD-3
2	ABAKADA ... INA
3	THEY NEST
4 (DTS EX)	QUILLS

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❷ SEDUCER
❸ DOUBLE TAKE
❹ RUGRATS
❺ ABAKADA... INA
❻ THE CROW
❼ ANTI TRUST

GALLERIA

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❷ RUGRATS
❸ ABAKADA...INA
❹ SWEET NOVEMBER
❺ MADERASO
❻ EVANGELINE 14

BACOLOD (034)441-0453

❶ SAVE THE LAST DANCE
❷ BAIT
❸ RUGRATS IN PARIS
❹ MS. CONGENIALITY
❺ DEMON GATE
❻ BABAING PUTIK

DOLBY DIGITAL dts SDDS

THEATER MOVIE GUIDE

ARANETA CENTER THEATERS 911-3101	
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-1	ABAKADA INA
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-2	SGT. MADERAZO
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-3 (DDS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-4 (SDDS)	THE CROW
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-5 (DTS)	RUGRATS
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-6 (DOLBY)	AIR BUD-3
ALI MALL CINEPLEX-7 (DOLBY)	DOUBLE TAKE
FARMERS PLAZA-1 (DOLBY)	SWEET NOVEMBER
FARMERS PLAZA-2 (DOLBY)	UUBUSIN KO ANG BALA
FIESTA CARNIVAL	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
NEW FRONTIER	CLOSED FOR RENOVATION
MANILA	
EASTERN	
MAXIM	ALIW MATAMIS ANG LASON
MIRAMAR	VIRGIN WIFE/TOO MUCH FLESH
ODEON	THE CROW
ODEON-2	ALIW MATAMIS ANG LASON
ROBEN	ABAKADA... INA
TANDEM-1	UHAW SA INIT
TANDEM-2	TOTAL AIKIDO
TIMES	PROOF OF LIFE/DEMON GATE
QUEZON CITY	
ACT-1	SENSUAL ISLAND
ACT-2	KAYA KO PERO MASAKIT
ACT-3	CLOSED
ACT-4	CLOSED
CORONET-2	BAYAD NA PATI KALULUWA MO
QUEZON-1	ALIW MATAMIS ANG LASON
REMAR	ABAKADA... INA
REMAR-2	ALIW MATAMIS ANG LASON
CUBAO	
OCEAN SUPERAMA	BABAENG PUTIK
OCEAN CINEMA-A	PANABLA
OCEAN CINEMA-B	CRISELDA
MANDALUYONG CITY	
SHANGRI-LA PLAZA MALL	635-20-79 / 633-78-51 TO 70
CINEMA-1	RUGRATS
CINEMA-2	SWEET NOVEMBER
CAINTA RIZAL	
STA. LUCIA EAST	(681-54091 TO 19)
CINEMA-1	ABAKADA... INA
CINEMA-2	MADERASO
CINEMA-3	SEDUCER
CINEMA-4 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	THE CROW
CINEMA-5 (DTS)	SAVE THE LAST DANCE
CINEMA-6	SA HULING PAGHIHINTAY
CINEMA-7	GLADIATOR
CINEMA-8	DRACULA 2000
CINEMA-9 (DTS)	SWEET NOVEMBER
CINEMA-10 (DOLBY DIGITAL)	RUGRATS
CINEMA-11 (SDDS)	DOUBLE TAKE
CINEMA-12	AIR BUD 3
CINEMA-14	ANTI-TRUST
CINEMA-15	ABAKADA... INA
LORES	
CINEMA-2	DI MATIGIL ANG INIT / HIYAS
CINEMA-3	MS. CONGENIALITY
POWER PLANT CINEMA	
CINEMA-1	AIR BUD 3
CINEMA-2	ANTI-TRUST
CINEMA-3	RUGRATS IN PARIS
CINEMA-4	DOUBLE TAKE
CINEMA-5	3000 MILES TO GRACELAND
CINEMA-6	SWEET NOVEMBER

'X' marks the 1M spot

IT has been 10 years since the Hailey brothers, popularly known as K-Ci & Jojo, burst into the music scene. The tandem is back and has made it again to the charts with their latest album, "X."

K-Ci & Jojo first gained attention as part of the multi-platinum hip-hop group called Jodeci.

The album is full of surprises and exciting twists and turns.

"The team of writers we used on 'X' is like family," says Jojo. "It's not like we just went out and got anybody. We really wanted to see how far we could go and bring music back to where it was."

KC-I adds: "People never really heard us work with some of these other producers. We put a twist in the plan to sort of say we appreciate you for accepting our ideas, but let's hear other people's ideas to hear how they sound."

The album has already been certified platinum after it reached the 1-million mark in the United States. The album's current hit, "Crazy," is also the premiere single from the soundtrack album of the blockbuster movie "Save the Last Dance."

"X" is distributed by MCA Universal.

New record has love letters

MCA Universal sets a trend as it releases the experimental record called "Mga Liham ng Pag-ibig ni Federico Pangilinan."

The record contains 12 letters narrating several life episodes, read to the accompaniment of background music.

The letters are read by Dennis Gulapa, Ryan Regino, Del Frias and Grace Foronda. The background instrumental music was arranged by Butch Miraflor.

The letters are filled with drama, tragedy, comedy, and heartwarming tales of love. They feature characters like Danny, Ramon, MM, Evelyn and even a congressman, involved in a love triangle, a mother-daughter conflict over forbidden love, life and love after death, and the love of a taxi driver.

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SWEET NOVEMBER
(PG - RT - 2:05)
Drama - Romance

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April 20 - Friday
6:15 PM - Sweet November
8:45 PM - Sweet November
11:15 PM - Sweet November

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Hear the Difference, Feel the Excitement

Can 'Talk TV' talk its way to the top?

By Emmanuel V. Papa

ON MARCH 12, 2001, ABS-CBN aired for the first time its new pre-lunch talk show, "Talk TV," which replaced "Today with Kris."

The new show has not one but four hosts—"veterans" Julius Babao, Kristine Bersola, and fresh faces Ryan Agoncillo and Janette McBride.

Are they capable of propelling the show to the top of the ratings?

Most talk shows talk about recycled topics—relationships, teen suicides, "bagets" life, etc. Can this new group spice up these topics?

McBride looks very fresh and is surely dazzling.

She makes the young male viewer want to touch her. Still, she obviously needs a lot of practice to enhance her hosting skills and spontaneity. Her delivery of some of her lines sounds like she memorized a script.

Agoncillo made a good move when he cut his hair. If McBride is the show's magnet for male viewers, Ryan is it for the girls. It's good that he apparently realized that hiding his eyes and looking like a younger Kevin Sorbo wouldn't earn him points.

Agoncillo is a good listener. Well versed in both Tagalog and English, he expresses his thoughts freely and with depth.

He also seems very polite. In one episode, after he talked to a woman guest, I read his lips saying "Thank you *po*" just moments before the commercials set in. That gesture showed very good manners indeed. And with a calming smile that surely makes many women wish he'd host the whole show alone, Agoncillo will surely go a long way.

Thumbs-up to you, Ryan!

Babao and Bersola, originally of "Alas Singko y Media," have been doing well as far as hosting a talk show is concerned. They provide balance in the sense that Bersola is free-spirited in her speech, while Julius is the restrained one.

Since they're the experienced ones in the foursome, they should be able to set the show's tempo. In the first few episodes, though, the way they asked their questions lacked oomph. Each question sounded like a monotonous "do-re-mi," and with no trace of authority.

These days, however, they show spontaneity.

Issue-wise, the show has presented new angles for old topics. For some episodes, field interviews were conducted, which is healthy for the show.

In its choice of resource persons, however, the production team should be more selective. In one episode that featured celebrity hunks, the show never gave a clear picture of what the topic was all about. There was a push-up contest among Carlos Agassi, Diether Ocampo and Babao, but it was never clearly stated that it was about fitness and exercise.

"Talk TV" has a unique combination of experience, youth, and wit, not to mention beautiful faces. It is capable of placing itself at the top of the ratings game.

But whatever happens, don't replace Janette McBride.

JULIUS Babao and Christine Bersola

'The Engineer' in farewell show

LEO Valdez takes to the stage at the Captain's Bar of the Mandarin Oriental at 9:30 tonight and Saturday night in a farewell concert.

The show also features Ima Castro as special guest and Toti Fuentes as musical director.

The balladeer-turned-stage-actor performs for the last time in the country before he moves on to Hong Kong, Singapore and Manchester to reprise his role as "The Engineer" in forthcoming "Miss Saigon" productions.

Leo's repertoire will include musical theater hits from Broadway musicals, such as "Music of the Night" (Phantom of the Opera), "Bring Him Home (Les Miserables), "The American Dream" (Miss Saigon), and a medley of Filipino hits including "Kahit Na," "Sana'y Maulit Muli," "Nang Minsan ang Minahal ay Ako."

Tickets at P1,200 each are available at the Mandarin Oriental Lobby shop. A first standard drink charge of P130+ also applies.

VALDEZ

AYALA CINEMAS
LATE NIGHT SCREENINGS

LATE NIGHT SCREENING SCHEDULES
FOR
APRIL 20 (Friday), 2001

SWEET NOVEMBER (PG-13)
Alabang Town Center 10:45 p.m.
Glorietta 4 12:00 mn
Greenbelt 11:10 p.m.

ANTITRUST (PG-13)
Alabang Town Center 11:00 p.m.
Greenbelt 12:00 mn

FINDING FORRESTER (GP)
Glorietta 4 11:15 p.m.
Greenbelt 12:00 mn

DOUBLE TAKE (PG-13)
Glorietta 4 12:00 mn

3,000 MILES TO GRACELAND (R)
Alabang Town Center 11:30 p.m.
Glorietta 4 12:00 mn
Greenbelt 11:00 p.m.

Watch "SWEET NOVEMBER" for FREE @ Greenbelt - TODAY - 11:10 pm!!!
Text HELLO GBELT and send to 2333 NOW!!!

Internet promo for Rachel's record

LOVERS of music are in for a special treat: a chance to own a free copy of "Tanging Pangarap," Rachel Alejandro's debut album from Viva Records.

Simply log on to www.MusicManila.com and answer trivia questions about Rachel and get a free copy of the 12-track album.

The album represents Rachel's journey toward self-rediscovery as well as her craft as an artist. The tracks include the carrier single "Tanging Pangarap," "High on Love," "Be Free to Fall in Love," and the critically acclaimed "Forever and a Day" which won in the Metropop song Festival last year.

Rachel describes the album as lyric-driven and theme-oriented. At the same time, the album rings with the sound of pop, a genre with which Rachel has always been identified.

The music video of "Tanging Pangarap" was shot entirely in Singapore during Rachel's stint in the recent Singaporean production of the Broadway musicale "Rent." The video is exclusively aired on MTV Asia.

For more details about this promo, log on to www.MusicManila.com call Viva Records at 727-2201. Log on to www.rachelalejandro.com for more information about Rachel.

The promo will run from April 23 to May 2.

ALEJANDRO

Soundtrack on Warner Sunset/ Reprise Records Featuring Music By Enya Paula Cole Stevie Nicks k.d. lang Barenaked Ladies

KEANU REEVES
CHARLIZE THERON
SWEET NOVEMBER
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Beauties . . .

(From page A32)

"The solution is to plant more trees," says Ms Schuck. "What I learned from the seminar is that only countries like New Zealand which has many trees would survive. But the Philippines would be wiped off the face of the earth. Still, it's not too late to save the planet."

After the parade of beauties, Ms Shuck and the contestants went on from stage to soil to plant trees at the pool side garden of the Hotel Inter Continental to kick of the beauty contest.

If plans push through, the pageant organizers would also create mini beauty parks around the Philippines dedicated to Mother Earth and local beauty queens.

Of course, the winner would have more in her hands than the dirt from the soil. She would come out a quarter of a million pesos richer in cash, with more prizes in products and perks.

POWER PLANT
CINEMA
Rockwell Center, Makati City ☎ Tel. No: 8981440-41
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AIR BUD 3 - G
12:30, 2:20, 4:10, 6:00, 7:50, 9:40
ANTI - TRUST - P 13
1:50, 4:10, 6:30, 8:50, 11:10
RUGRATS IN PARIS - G
12:50, 2:40, 4:30, 6:20, 8:10, 10:00
DOUBLE TAKE - P 13
1:00, 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 9:00, 11:00
3000 MILES - R 18
1:10, 3:20, 5:30, 7:40, 10:00
SWEET NOVEMBER - P 13
12:00, 2:30, 5:00, 7:30, 10:00

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BIG SHOT. ONE BIG MOUTH.
THE SWITCH IS ON.
DOUBLE TAKE
Touchstone Pictures

Distributed by BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL thru Columbia Pictures

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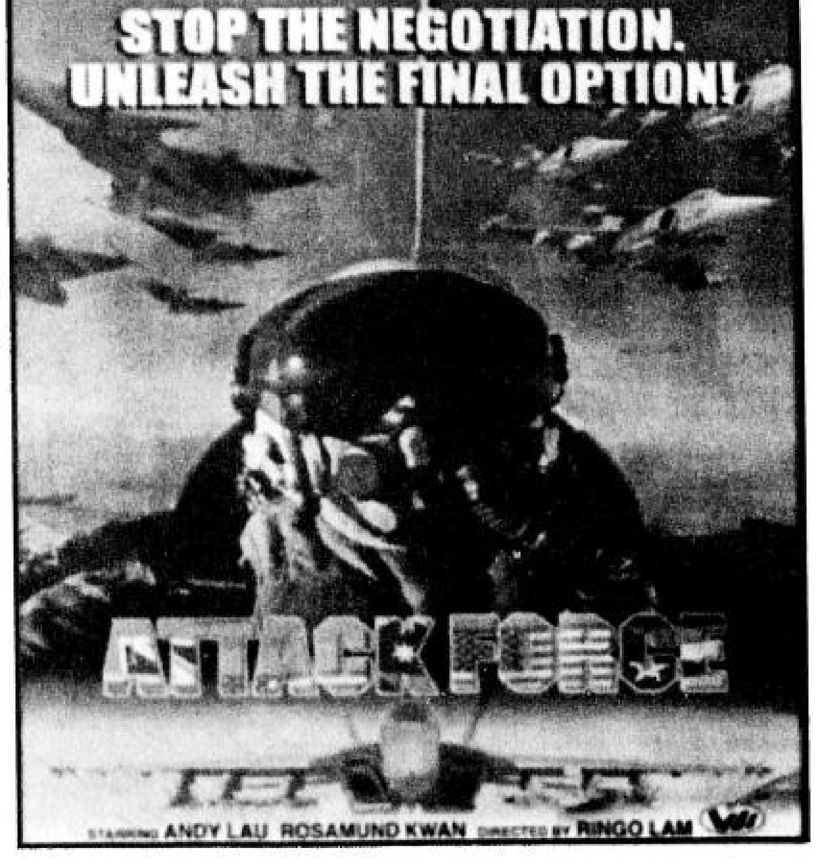

STOP THE NEGOTIATION.
UNLEASH THE FINAL OPTION!
ATTACK FORCE
STARRING ANDY LAU ROSAMUND KWAN DIRECTED BY RINGO LAM

ENTERTAINMENT

LOUIE C. CAMINO, Editor

Tortured souls and star-crossed lovers

KRIS AND TELL

Kris Aquino

I WENT on a reading binge over the Holy Week break. I went through five novels and these two are the most noteworthy of the bunch.

"The Rescue" by **Nicholas Sparks** (Hardbound, P855, National Bookstore and Powerbooks). If there was ever a book that I felt had a lead character whose life held so many parallels to my own, it would be this. Several months back, my cousin **Marla** told me I had to read this book because she kept thinking of me and **Josh** as she was reading it.

Denise is a 29-year-old single mother of **Kyle,** a four-and-a-half-year-old boy with a speech and learning deficiency. Her child was diagnosed to have CAPD or Central Auditory Processing Disorder, which has caused a delay in his receptive and expressive language.

I am a 30-year-old single mom of a five-year-old. My Josh has been diagnosed with ADHD, or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, which is coupled with a marked delay in his speech.

The struggle as related in this book, the day-to-day frustrations, and the feelings of "Why my child, when outwardly he's such a beautiful, robust boy?" are feelings I share. I saw a kindred spirit in the questions of Denise who asked if she were to blame for her son's sufferings, and if she had a conventional two-parent household would her son's progress be faster and easier?

. And every single mother out there not only fears about loving again, but asks how do you reconcile a new man entering your family's secure cocoon? Would he treat your offspring kindly and would he eventually run away when it's time for a commitment?

If you've read spark's other works such as "The Notebook" and "A Walk to Remember," you would know that he's very good at relating to and relaying accurately a woman's emotions, as well as providing his male characters with sensitivity.

In other words, the tortured souls he writes about strike a chord in all of us. And he sure knows how to get our tear ducts flowing. He's a male author who's unabashedly in touch with his feminine side.

In "The Rescue," Taylor and Denise are brought together because of a hurricane that causes Denise to lose control of her car. Her vehicle topples over an embankment, and she momentarily loses consciousness, while Kyle, unharmed, innocently wanders off towards the swamp, unaware he's in mortal danger of drowning.

Taylor is a volunteer fireman whose strong instincts lead him to find Kyle.

Taylor and Denise fall in love, but just as you're expecting a happily-ever-after ending, Taylor, afraid of commitment and unable to share the painful memories related to his father's death in a fire, the burden of which he has carried for most of his life, pushes Denise away.

Shortly after their break-up, there is another life-threatening fire, and a sorrowful, unexpected death.

The writing may be dismissed by some as sappy, and I've read reviewers dismiss Sparks as being one-dimensional and emotionally manipulative, but I appreciate his poetic way with the most gut-wrenching dialogues.

"The Rescue" is a romantic, evocative read that I highly recommend. "Love, Always" by **Sally Brompton** (Softbound, P450, Page One at The Power Plant mall in Rockwell) is a very painful, powerful book that is involving and prompts the reader to engage in soul-searching. **Jane** and **Ben** are star-crossed lovers. They fell in love in their early twenties, but Ben is incapable of fidelity and he drives Jane away. She gets pregnant by another man, doesn't marry him and raises her daughter **Beattie** on her own.

Jane and Ben meet again eight years later because Ben's aunt Margaret is the tenant of a part of the new home that Jane has purchased. Ben is now married to the beautiful **Rebecca**.

Beattie dies after being accidentally run over while running playfully on the street. Jane is vulnerable and is on the brink of insanity. She embarks on an affair with Ben.

The book actually opens with the suicide of Rebecca. The story follows the progression of Ben's obsession and Jane's attempts to put her life back in order. **Richard** comes into Jane's life. Her life teeters between the tragic and the hopeful.

Jane, because of Rebecca's death, starts to see Ben's selfishness and cowardice. She also starts to see the inner beauty and true worth of Rebecca, which Ben had stifled. Jane finds the strength to accept, nurture and fight for Richard's love.

This is the first Sally Brompton work I've read. She's a British novelist who writes sparingly in a simple, down to the core style. Yet the brevity of words allows the reader to view in her mind's eye a clearer picture. There's no need for the author to expound on her characters' emotions, because her pared-down writing is in itself soulful.

"Love, Always" drives home the point that a lasting relationship isn't based merely on the depth of love or the history that the lovers share. It also manifests that happiness does come at a price, and whether we can admit it or not, we at one point in our lives have been guilty of expecting and requiring others to pay that price for us. Those of us who are even less fortunate allow themselves to pay that price for those we mistakenly love.

Since "Bridget Jones' Diary" I've become a fan of the dry, ironic wit of British novels, but with "Love, Always" I've come to appreciate the unique subtlety and firm grasp of reality that a British novel can invest in a love story that has actually been told many times over. This is another must-read.

Beauties and the trees

BY NINI VALERA

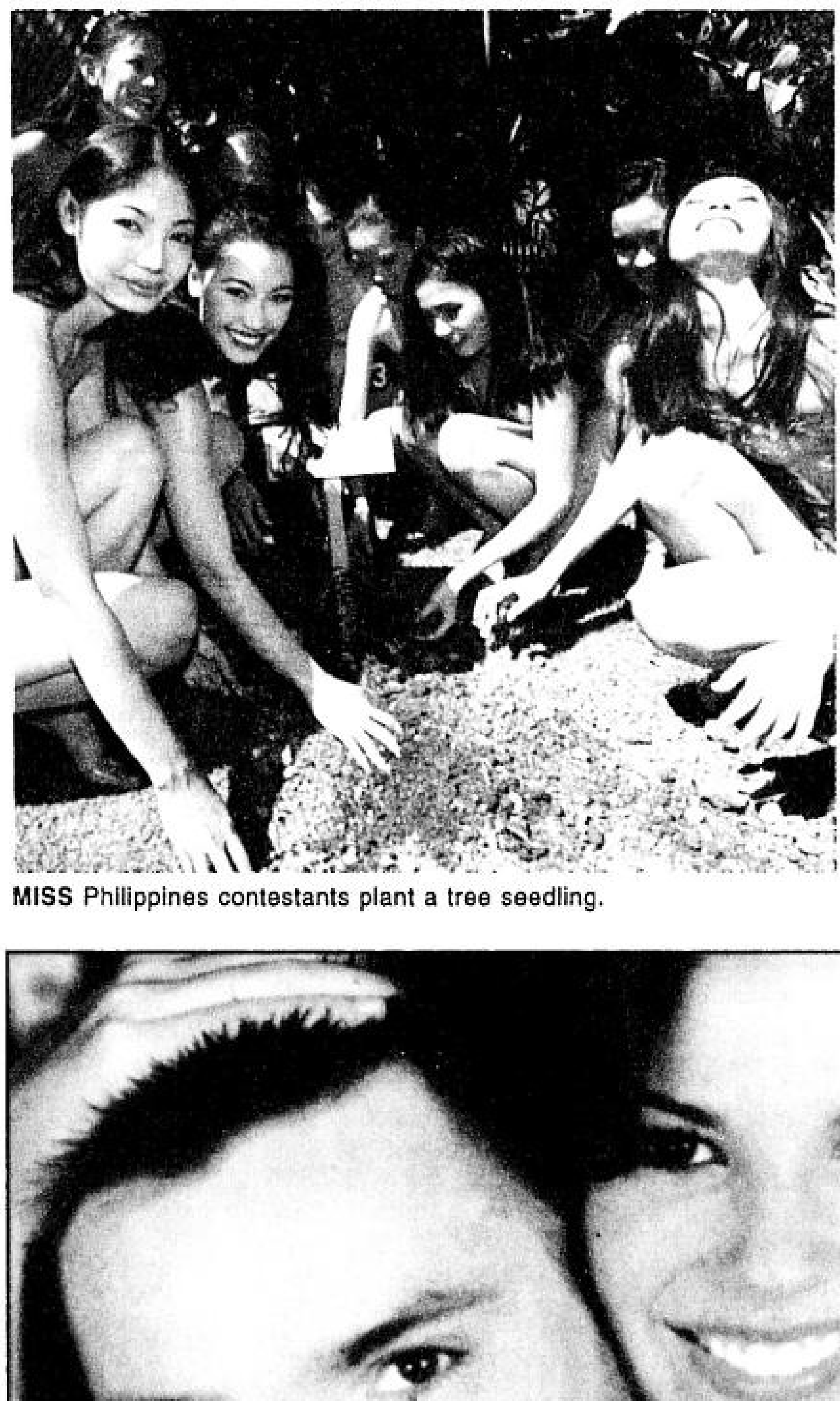
MOTHER Earth is sick and she has only a 50 percent chance of surviving, according to beauty contest organizer Lorraine Schuck.

With this grim scenario, Ms Schuck and her Carousel Productions yesterday presented to members of the press the 24 candidates vying for the Miss Philippines 2001 Beauty Contest at the poolside of the Hotel Inter Continental in Makati City.

The winner of the contest will represent the Philippines in the first Miss Earth, "a truly global competition that will go beyond the boundaries of Asia and the Pacific."

Giving a beauty contest a new spin is a refreshing twist in the pageant arena. More than parading in skimpy swimsuits, the contestants are required to truly care and help preserve the environment, which, according to Ms Schuck who had just attended a workshop conducted by environmentalist Roy Alvarez, is in danger of disintegrating.

BEAUTIES/A31



MISS Philippines contestants plant a tree seedling.

CONTESTANTS Anjelly Gamboa (left) and Andrea del Rosario. ERNIE SARMIENTO

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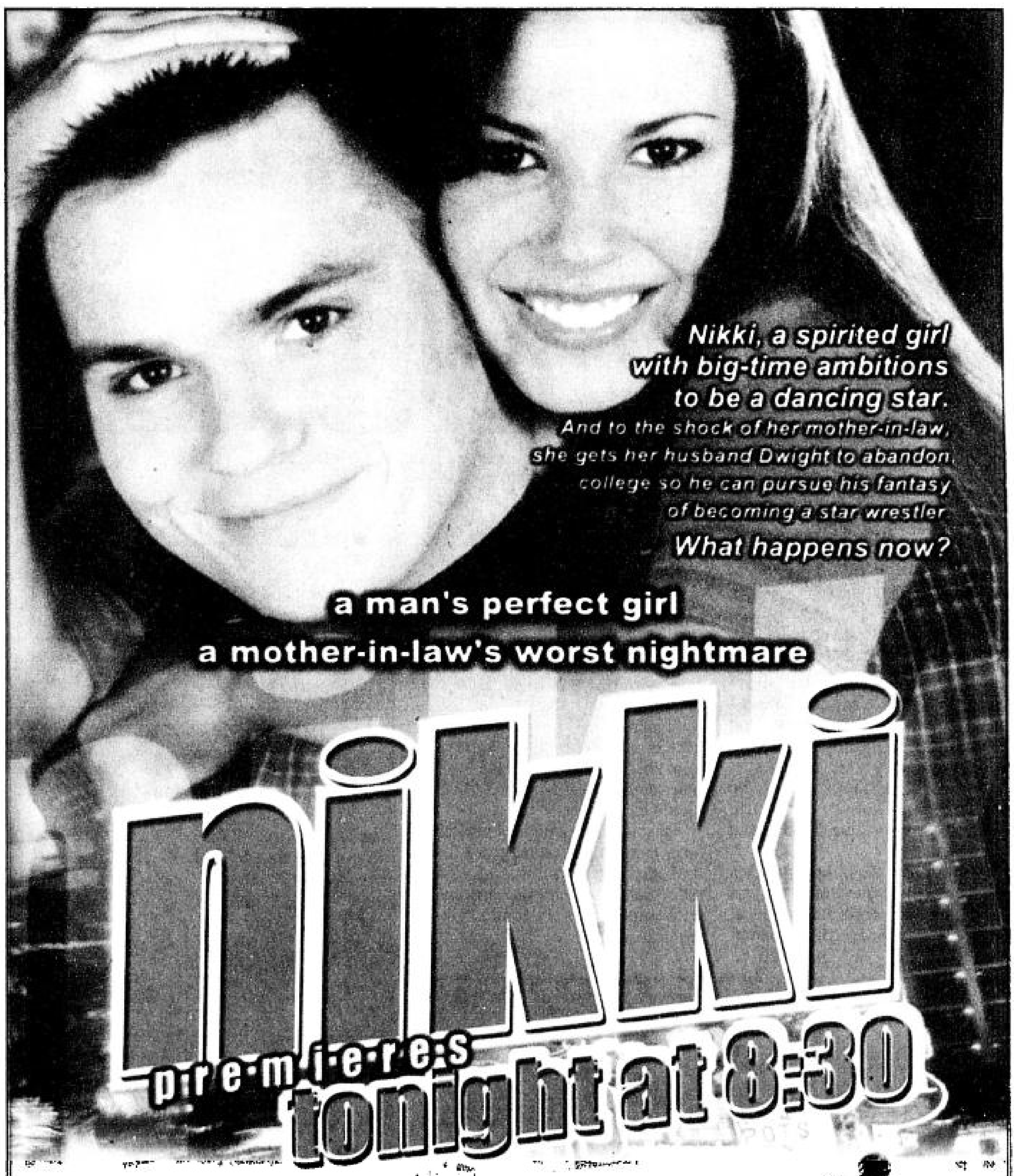
Nikki, a spirited girl
with big-time ambitions
to be a dancing star.
And to the shock of her mother-in-law,
she gets her husband Dwight to abandon
college so he can pursue his fantasy
of becoming a star wrestler.
What happens now?
a man's perfect girl
a mother-in-law's worst nightmare
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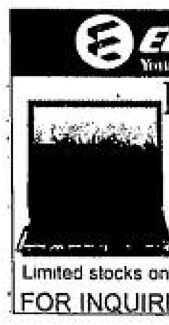

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BUSINESS

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ADB sees higher growth in 2002

Peso-Dollar Rate

P50.06 = $1
As of 5 p.m.,
April 19, 2001

Y 122.14 = $1
The US dollar was trading
at 122.14 as of 5 p.m.,
April 19, 2001

GOLD:$261.30/261.80
per ounce Hong Kong,
April 19, 2001

By Doris C. Dumlao

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday said the Philippine economy will grow by more than 4 percent in 2002 after an expected slowdown this year due to the global economic contraction.

From a 3.9-percent expansion in gross domestic product (GDP) last year, growth is expected to slow to 3 percent this year due to the "looming slowdown in the US economy and the slower global demand for electronics exports," the bank said in its Asian Development Outlook released yesterday.

The ADB's forecast is consistent with the Macapagal administration's expectations of faster GDP growth starting 2002. Based on new medium-term macroeconomic targets mapped out by the inter-agency Development Budget Coordination Committee, the country's real GDP growth would accelerate to a range of 4.7 to 5.2 percent next year from the 3.8 to 4.3 percent target this year.

The government is confident that the rosy growth outlook for the next six years would be fueled by an average export growth of 9 percent and a low-interest rate regime. While discounting the possible deterioration of the peso-dollar exchange rate over the medium-term, the government hopes for the stabilization of oil prices below $25 per barrel.

On the other hand, the ADB report noted that a major concern for the country this year would be the continued decline of the construction sector, an important source of employment for the urban poor. The contraction, in turn, was attributed to overcapacity and increasing non-performing loans, which deprive new construction projects of bank financing.

The report added that the slowdown in the industry sector has been reflective of economic performance in recent years, specially since the Philippines has lagged behind in shifting its output and employment structure away from agriculture to industry and to services.

After this year's May elections, the report stressed that the country's priority should be improved economic governance.

"A favorable environment needs to be developed to attract foreign direct investment, which is now crucial in a context of anticipated slower export growth and the government's fiscal deficit," the ADB report said.

"Provided that the government can revitalize the governance reforms and maintain political stability, the exchange rate, stock prices, inflation, and growth rates should all improve."

The report said that continued reform of the financial system was needed this year, specifically the drafting of the implementing rules and regulations for the Central Banking Law of 2000.

"In 2002, any cyclical recovery in global electronics depends on a worldwide recovery of the information and communications technology sector, which will affect the economy's export projections. By this time, it is expected that reform programs such as the Omnibus Power Bill, long delayed by the country's political problems in 2000 and the intervening elections, will be in place," it said.

The report stressed, however, that next year's recovery would depend on how the new administration would be able to trim down the fiscal deficit.

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All rebates earned from your Shell fuel, non-fuel, and other card transactions will be accumulated over a specific billing cycle. All valid rebates will then be deducted from your total Shell transactions.

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For added peace of mind on the road, the Shell-Citibank MasterCard offers special vehicle privileges from Wheelers Club International. For those unfortunate times on the road, help is just a call away with their 24-hour towing service. You can also fully enjoy other privileges and services such as vehicle registration assistance, free personal accident insurance worth P20,000, and legal and professional advice in case of accidents and insurance claims. Cardmember must present his/her Shell-Citibank MasterCard and the vehicle must be registered under his/her name to avail of the free towing and roadside assistance.

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All requests for credit limit increase are subject to the final review and approval of Citibank.

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The Shell-Citibank MasterCard is also offering a special welcome gift for those who will have their applications approved within the promo period. These newly-approved applicants will receive a large Ferrari F50 model car for free. This scaled-down replica displays frill fidelity to the classic sports car which makes it a hot collector's item. To avail, all you need to do is apply for a Shell-Citibank MasterCard. All approved Shell-Citibank MasterCard principal card applications within the promo period will automatically be entitled to this very special gift.

To qualify for a Shell-Citibank MasterCard, one has to be 21-65 years old, with an annual income of not less than P120,000, a resident of Metro Manila or other select urban cities nationwide and with a landline phone in the residence or office.

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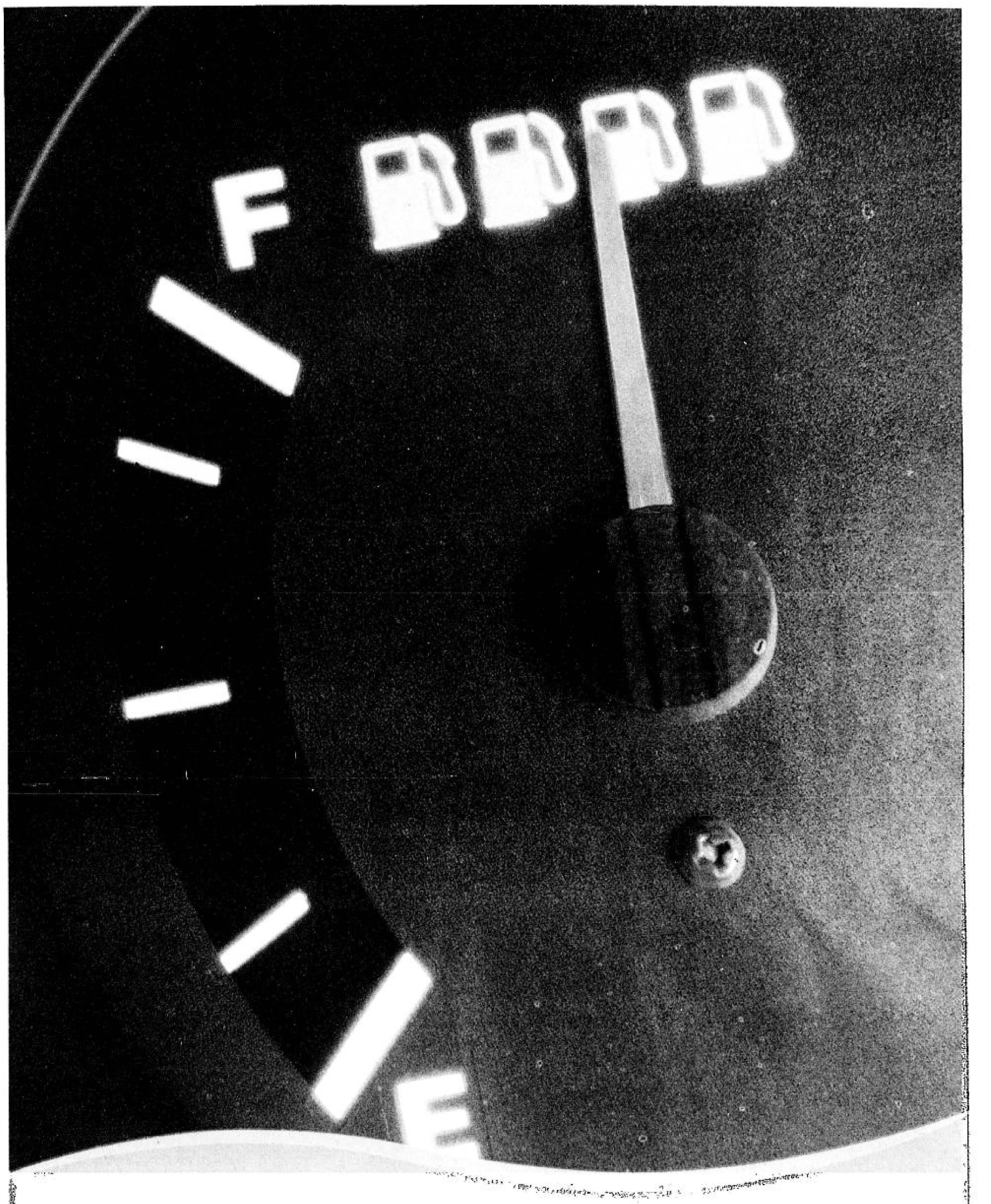
ADVT



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No. 0433, series of 2001.

Philippine Stock Exchange

(As of Thursday, April 19, 2001)

STOCKS	OPEN	HIGH	LOW	CLOSE	VOLUME
BANKS & FINANCIAL SERVICES					
BANKS					
Asiatrust Dev. Bank Inc.	5.7	6	5.7	6	35,000
Bank of the Phil. Islands	69	71	69	71	694,400
China Banking Corp.	600	650	600	650	15,700
Equitable PCI Bank Inc.	44.5	44.5	43.5	43.5	20,300
Metropolitan Bank & Trust	214	215	210	213	54,440
Prudential Bank	500	500	500	500	500
Philippine National Bank	44.5	44.5	44.5	44.5	26,100
Security Bank Corp.	17.75	18.75	17.5	18.75	683,200
Union Bank of the Phil.	26	26	26	26	100
FINANCIAL SERVICE					
Manulife Financial Corp.	1250	1270	1250	1265	8,800
Sun Life Financial Serv.	960	965	955	960	36,610
COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL					
COMMUNICATION					
ABS-CBN Broadcasting Corp.		38	38	37	38
59,400					
Digital Telecom Phils. Inc.	0.45	0.45	0.43	0.43	3,460,000
Globe Telecom Inc.	655	655	655	655	9,400
Manila Bulletin Pub. Corp.	3	3.2	3	3.2	6,000
Piltel	0.51	0.51	0.51	0.51	100,000
Philstar.Com Inc.	1.3	1.3	1.3	1.3	10,000
Phil. Long Dis Tel Co.	710	710	700	700	252,440
Philweb.Com Inc.	0.048	0.049	0.046	0.047	213,000,000
POWER & ENERGY					
Manila Electric Co. A	41	41	40	40	34,100
Manila Electric Co. B	54.5	54.5	54	54.5	1,540,500
Petron Corp.	1.88	1.94	1.86	1.9	4,647,000
Trans-Asia Oil and Energy	0.88	0.88	0.88	0.88	20,000
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES					
Int'l Container Term'l Sv	1.22	1.24	1.2	1.22	1,590,000
CONSTRUCTION & OTHER RELATED PRODUCTS					
Union Cement Corp.	1	1	0.97	1	780,000
FOOD, BEVERAGES & TOBACCO					
Jollibee Foods Corp.	12.75	12.75	12.75	12.75	930,000
La Tondeña Distillers Inc.	30	30	30	30	314,700
RFM Corp.	0.93	0.93	0.93	0.93	130,000
San Miguel Corp. A	46	46	46	46	11,800
Universal Robina Corp.	4.4	4.4	4.4	4.4	2,327,000
Vitarich Corp.	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.5	110,000
HOLDING FIRMS					
Abacus Con Res & Hdg A	0.59	0.59	0.56	0.59	120,000
Ayala Corp.	7.5	7.6	7.5	7.6	1,279,000
Aboitiz Equity Ventures	1.26	1.26	1.2	1.2	3,917,000
Alliance Global Group Inc.	12	12.5	12	12.25	2,500
Ajo.Net Holdings Inc.	0.75	0.75	0.75	0.75	10,000
A. Soriano Corp.	0.27	0.27	0.27	0.27	640,000
APC Group Inc.	0.17	0.18	0.17	0.18	450,000
ATN Holdings Inc.	2.4	2.4	2.32	2.32	35,000
Bacnotan Cons Indus Inc.	13	13	13	13	1,000
Benpres Holdings Corp.	1.64	1.64	1.5	1.52	14,544,000
DMCI Holdings Inc.	0.31	0.31	0.31	0.31	710,000
Filinvest Dev. Corp.	1.02	1.02	1	1	185,000
First Phil Hldgs Corp.	22	22.25	22	22	83,500
Forum Pacific Inc.	0.42	0.42	0.42	0.42	10,000
Global Equities Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.26	0.26	10,000
Ionics Inc.	12	12	12	12	1,000
J.G. Summit Holdings Inc.	1.88	1.88	1.86	1.86	455,000
Megaworld Corp.	0.71	0.73	0.71	0.73	1,670,000
Metro Pacific Corp.	0.47	0.48	0.47	0.47	4,530,000
Philtread Holdings Corp.	4	4	4	4	20,000
Philtread Hdgs. Corp. B	4	4	4	4	10,000
Solid Group Inc.	0.44	0.44	0.43	0.43	890,000
Unioil Res. & Holdings Co.	0.1	0.105	0.1	0.105	200,000
Uniwide Holdings Inc.	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	230,000
Waterfront Phils. Inc.	0.27	0.27	0.25	0.27	220,000
MANUFACTURING, DISTRIBUTION & TRADING					
Music Corp.	2.6	2.6	2.55	2.55	55,000
Mabuhay Vinyl Corp.	0.59	0.59	0.59	0.59	10,000
Picop Resources Inc.	0.105	0.105	0.105	0.105	600,000
Central Azucar Don Pedro	0.95	0.95	0.95	0.95	10,000
SPI Technologies Inc.	13	13.25	13	13	560,800
Steniel Manufacturing	0.56	0.56	0.56	0.56	100,000
HOTEL, RECREATION & OTHER SERVICE					
Belle Corp.	0.46	0.53	0.46	0.51	4,340,000
Fairmont Holdings Inc.	0.5	0.5	0.48	0.49	930,000
Manila Jockey Club	20	20	20	20	20,000
Premiere Ent. Prod. Inc.	0.22	0.23	0.22	0.23	80,000
Philippine Racing Club	4	4	4	4	4,333,000
BONDS, PREFERRED & WARRANTS					
ABS-CBN Hldgs. Corp (Pdr)	38	38.5	37	38	872,200
Omico Corp. Warrant	0.0028	0.0028	0.0026	0.0026	32,000,000
PLDT (10% Pref) Series W	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,300
PLDT (10% Pref) Series X	10.25	10.25	10.25	10.25	1,100
PROPERTY					
Ayala Land Inc.	5.7	5.7	5.4	5.5	3,401,000
Araneta Properties Inc.	0.26	0.26	0.25	0.25	270,000
C & P Homes Inc.	0.24	0.25	0.24	0.25	1,110,000
Cyber Bay Corp.	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	1,100,000
Empire East Land Inc.	0.32	0.33	0.32	0.33	1,040,000
Filinvest Land Inc.	2.08	2.08	2	2	2,378,000
Kuok Phil. Properties	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	240,000
SM Prime Holdings Inc.	6.8	6.8	6.8	6.8	3,684,000
Zipporah Rlty Hldgs. Inc.	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.1	130,000
MINING					
Lepanto Cons Mng. Co. A	0.165	0.165	0.165	0.165	300,000
Lepanto Cons. Mng. Co B	0.195	0.195	0.195	0.195	30,000
Omico Corp.	0.004	0.004	0.004	0.004	16,000,000
Philex Mining Corp. A	0.17	0.17	0.17	0.17	300,000
Philex Mining Corp. B	0.18	0.18	0.18	0.18	800,000
United Paragon Mining Co.	0.125	0.125	0.125	0.125	20,000
OIL					
Imperial Res.	0.024	0.026	0.024	0.026	8,000,000
Interport Res.	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	0.0042	6,000,000
Interport Res. B	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	0.0044	1,000,000
Pacifica	0.015	0.015	0.015	0.015	6,000,000
Sinophil Corp.	0.075	0.08	0.075	0.08	900,000

	SHARES	VALUE (P)
Banks & Fin Svc	1,575,150	131,250,245.00
Comm'l & Ind'l	303,468,740	432,024,040.00
PRO	13,353,000	49,868,040.00
Mining	17,450,000	316,850.00
OIL	21,900,000	391,100.00
GRAND TOTALS:	357,746,890	613,850,275.00

AVERAGES		
Banks & Fin Svc	586.12	UP 3.31
Comm'l & Ind'l	1,941.83	UP 10.58
PRO	558.49	UP 0.63
Mining	1,095.71	UNCH 0.00
OIL	1.56	UNCH 0.00
All Shares Index	733.62	UP 7.57
Composite	1,428.87	UP 2.90

NO. OF ADVANCES: 37; NO. OF DECLINES: 23; NO. OF UNCHANGED: 31; NO. OF TRADED ISSUES: 91; NO. OF TRADES: 2,327

CURRENCIES

April 19, 2001

Country	Unit	Euro Equivalent	Foreign currency in US$	Foreign currency in Peso
United States	Dollar	1.130454	1.000000	50.1730
Japan	Yen	0.009244	0.008177	0.4103
United Kingdom	Pound	1.613045	1.426900	71.5919
Hong Kong	Dollar	0.144943	0.128217	6.4330
Switzerland	Franc	0.653668	0.578235	29.0118
Canada	Dollar	0.722612	0.639223	32.0717
Singapore	Dollar	0.628031	0.555556	27.8739
Australia	Dollar	0.557094	0.492805	24.7255
Bahrain	Dinar	2.998712	2.652661	133.0920
Kuwait	Dinar	N/A	N/A	N/A
Saudi Arabia	Rial	0.301430	0.266645	13.3784
Brunei	Dollar	0.623355	0.551420	27.6664
Indonesia	Rupiah	0.000103	0.000091	0.0046
Thailand	Baht	0.024955	0.022075	1.1076
UAE	Dirham	0.307782	0.272264	13.6603
Korea	Won	0.000860	0.000761	0.0382
Euro	Euro	1.000000	0.884600	44.3830
Germany	Mark	0.511292	0.452289	22.6927
France	Franc	0.152450	0.134856	6.7661
Netherlands	Guilder	0.453780	0.401414	20.1401
Austria	Schilling	0.072672	0.064286	3.2254
Belgium	Franc	0.024790	0.021929	1.1002
Italy	Lire	0.000517	0.000457	0.0229
Finland	Markka	0.168188	0.148779	7.4647
Portugal	Escudo	0.004988	0.004412	0.2214
Spain	Peseta	0.006011	0.005317	0.2668
Luxemburg	Franc	0.024790	0.021929	1.1002
Ireland	Punt	1.269738	1.12321	56.3548

Shares climb on US rate cut

SHARE prices rose 0.2 percent yesterday, aided by a cut in US interest rates that boosted Wall Street, but the gains were capped by domestic concerns.

The Philippine Stock Exchange composite index added 2.90 points to close at 1,428.87.

A gain in Wall Street and the US Fed's decision to cut its key interest rate by half a point to 4.5 percent triggered "follow through buying" at the Manila market, said Nestor Aguila of DA Market Securities.

Investors, however, immediately took profits on some blue chips, he said.

"I think uncertainty continues to remain in our market (due) to domestic" concerns, Aguila said.

Volume turnover remained thin at 357.85 million shares worth P614.07 million from 394 million shares worth P508 million. Gainers outpaced losers, 37 to 23, while 31 issues were unchanged.

Gains yesterday were also offset by concerns ahead of May's congressional elections and uncertainty on the government's policy reforms, added Haria Liu of Summit Securities Inc.

"There is a lack of enthusiasm in the market ahead of the May elections and investors are also looking for clear-cut policy reforms, which the government cannot deliver until after the new Congress is convened," Liu said.

Most players waited for the Bangko Sentral to match the Fed's policy move. The bank's policy-making Monetary Board holds its weekly meeting every Thursday.

But traders said investors were getting skeptical that more rate cuts would help spur economic activity, as indicators show the cuts in previous months have yet to make an impact on the domestic economy.

"Interest rates had been cut before, and every time we cut there is a lag period. But people look for early indications, and the cuts in the last few months have not resulted in any positive signs," said Albert Chua, portfolio manager of All Asia Asset Management.

"This raises questions on how effective the 'low interest rate' tool is in helping the economy," Chua said. *AFP, Reuters*

20% in 2001

BPI sees profit growth

BY ELENA R. TORRIJOS

BANK of the Philippine Islands expects profit to rise by more than 20 percent this year from last year's P3.05 billion.

BPI president Xavier Loinaz made the projection in a briefing with reporters following BPI's annual stockholders' meeting yesterday morning.

Loinaz also disclosed that the first-quarter profit of the country's second largest lender was "substantially higher" than in the same period last year.

The Ayala-controlled bank has blamed P2 billion in one-time merger costs with Far East Bank and Trust Co. and Ayala Insurance Holdings Corp. and P3.6 billion in loan-loss reserves for dragging down its profit by 35 percent last year.

The P2 billion in merger costs resulted from early retirement packages, accounting changes and cleaning up of pre-paid expenses in relation to the merger with FEBTC and the absorption of five life insurance units under AIHC.

For this year, he said BPI would allocate no higher than P1.5 billion in loan-loss reserves as the bank's loan-loss reserve cover was now at about 60 percent or far above the industry average of more than 40 percent.

He added that non-performing loan ratio was still much the same as the 12 percent as of end-December and this was probably the peak.

He said the bank's growth would come from its loans to consumers and major corporations and its credit card business.

DISCLOSURES

ELECTED to the board of **Ayala Land Inc.** were Fernando Zobel de Ayala, Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala II, Francisco Licuanan III, Ariston Estrada Jr., Mercedita Nolledo, Delfin Lazaro, Leandro Locsin Jr., Ramon del Rosario Jr. and Manuel Bengzon.

* * *

ELECTED to the board of **Pilipino Telephone Corp.** were Benito Chiongbian, Victor Chiongbian, Arturo Diago Jr., Ramoncito Fernandez, Edward Hummer, George Lim, Anastacio Martirez, Napoleon Nazareno, Rolando Peña, Claro Carmelo Ramirez and Ricardo Zarate.

* * *

GRANT Ferguson of **1st e-Bank** resigned as director of the bank.

* * *

RE-ELECTED directors of **South China Resources Inc.** were Edgardo Reyes, Wilfrido Reyes, Belen Castro, Felix Maramba Jr. and Felipe Yap.

* * *

ATOK Big-Wedge Co. Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on June 15, 4 p.m. at the 18/F, Conference Room, Aurora Tower in Cubao, Quezon City. Stockholders as of April 30 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

BASIC Consolidated Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 25, 2 p.m. at the Manila A & B of Shangri-La Makati Hotel. Stockholders as of April 25 shall be entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

MANILA Electric Co. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 29, 9 a.m. at the Meralco Theater, Pasig City. Only stockholders as of Feb. 28 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

* * *

SOLID Group Inc. will hold its annual stockholders' meeting on May 8, 3 p.m. at the Turf Room of Manila Polo Club, Makati City. Only stockholders as of April 2 are entitled to notice of and to vote at the meeting.

Compiled by Maricar D. Tolosa, PDI Research

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MON. - FRI. (8 AM - 7 PM) / SATURDAY (8 AM - 3 PM)

BSP cuts overnight loan rates

By Clarissa S. Batino

A SURPRISE announcement of a half-percentage point cut by the US Federal Reserve prompted the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to match the reduction and bring down its key policy rates back to year-ago level.

Effective today, the BSP's borrowing rate from banks is down to 9.5 percent while its lending rate is reduced to 11.75 percent.

The peso reacted to the rate reduction and went back to close at 50.06 to $1 yesterday from 50.11 the previous day.

A trader from a foreign bank said the peso had started to recover and move back to the 49-to-$1 zone in early trade yesterday but the BSP's announcement of a rate cut dragged it back to the 50-to-$1 range.

The BSP's policy-making Monetary Board pointed to a benign inflation in the first quarter and a stable peso as among the primary reasons for the rates cut and the US Fed decision was only secondary.

Bank analysts, however, explained that the central bank took advantage of the Fed rates cut to justify a much-needed reduction in local interest rates as the government anticipated a more aggressive borrowing stance to finance a swelling deficit.

The US Fed announcement that brought down US short-term interest rates to 4.5 percent took markets by surprise although analysts said it was forthcoming after recent economic data revealed the US economy had been slowing down.

A cut in interest rates leads to lower cost of loans, encourages the private sector to borrow to put up new businesses or expand existing ones.

Stronger regional currencies have started to influence a recovery in the local currency but with lower BSP interest rates, banks realized they would sustain lower profits from government securities and started shifting some of their peso assets to dollars.

A bank analyst, however, assured that the negative impact of the BSP move on the peso would be short-lived.

JG Summit to expand overseas

By Elena R. Torrijos

JG SUMMIT Holdings Inc., the flagship holding company of the Gokongwei family, will pursue an aggressive overseas expansion program mainly by increasing its food investments in Asia.

In documents filed with the SEC, JG Summit said that it would explore opportunities in India and Indochina for branded consumer foods and tap opportunities in Singapore-based affiliate United Industrial Corp.

UIC, of which JG Summit holds a 23-percent stake, has a majority interest in publicly listed Singapore Land Ltd., which owns one of Singapore's largest office property portfolios. UIC also has interests in the manufacture of products ranging from chemicals to computer-related products and in shipping and travel services.

In an interview yesterday, JG Summit executive vice president Lance Gokongwei said the company, through its snack food arm Universal Robina Corp., would also hike investments in existing food businesses in China, Thailand and Malaysia.

URC currently counts five food subsidiaries in China, two in Malaysia and one each in Thailand and Singapore. It will fund expansion of plant and other physical assets of these international units in order to boost revenue to $50 million this year from $42 million last year, Gokongwei said.

On the other hand, Gokongwei said JG Summit would prioritize its capital expenditures in its airline, property development and telecommunications businesses through Cebu Pacific Air, Robinsons Land Corp. and Digital Telecommunications Philippines Inc., respectively.

The company yesterday reported a net income of P2.98 billion last year, or 77.4 percent down from the previous year's P13.19 billion, which included extraordinary gains from the sale of stakes in APO Cement, Philippine Commercial International Bank and Far East Bank and Trust Bank Co. Excluding non-recurring items, profit rose 6.4 percent from P2.8 billion.

Sun Life taps small investors

THE PHILIPPINE subsidiary of Canada's Sun Life Finance Group has launched a mutual fund tapping investments as small as P10,000.

Managed by Sun Life Asset Management Co., the Prosperity Funds, as the mutual fund is called, puts the pooled investments of various individuals in a diversified portfolio of assets like stocks and bonds.

In exchange, the investors receive shares of the mutual fund whose value depends on the prevailing market price of the assets.

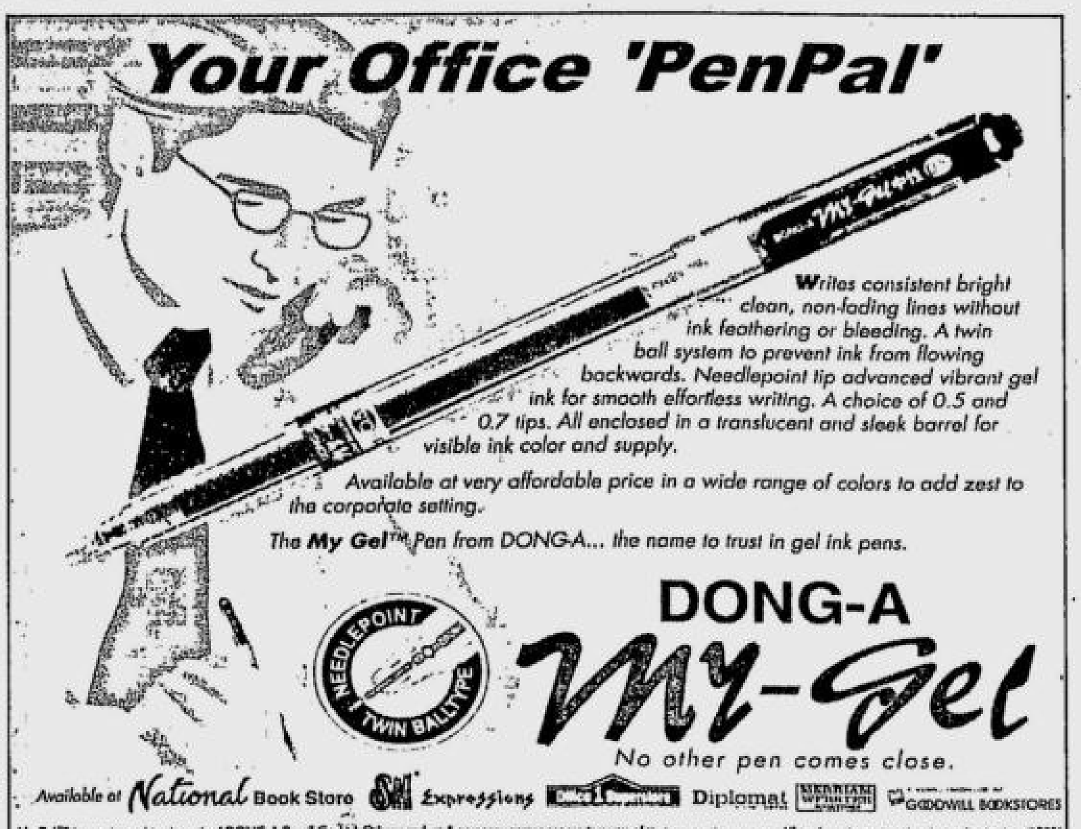
In a statement, the company said this particular mutual fund is sensitive to the times, when individuals with small investible resources are hard put to find professional managers who would want to handle their account.

As a tightening economy makes it necessary for individuals to look for ways to grow their money, the company has advised to seek investments that can earn a return higher than the inflation rate.

This rules out putting one's money in commercial banks given that the prevailing interest rate is roughly 1.6 a year. The volatility of the stock market, on the other hand, discourages a return higher than the inflation rate of 6.7 percent as of March this year.

The company said pooled investments, or mutual fund, could ensure greater yield for small investors.

For choice of investments, Sun Life Prosperity Fund offers equity fund, bond fund and balance fund. The funds are managed by a team of professional managers designated as such by the internationally recognized Chartered Financial Analyst in the Philippines.



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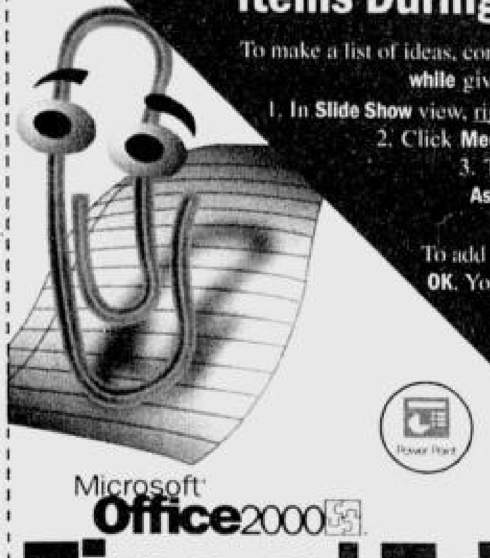

Tip #6. Keep Track of the Action Items During a Slide Show

To make a list of ideas, comments, suggestions or actions **while** giving a **PowerPoint** presentation:

1. In **Slide Show** view, right-click anywhere in the slide
2. Click **Meeting Minder**, then **Action Items**
3. Type info into the **Description**, **Assigned To**, and **Due Date** boxes
4. Click **Add**, then **OK**

To add more, repeat **Step 3**, then click **OK**. Your items appear on a new slide at the end of your slide show.

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IHAP ESTIMATE

Pagcor IPO can raise ₱40B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE INVESTMENT Houses Association of the Philippines yesterday assured the Department of Finance that a favorable interpretation of laws involving Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. would make an initial public offering of the gaming firm still feasible.

In a letter to Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo, IHAP said a public offering of 45 percent of Pagcor would generate for the government between P20 billion and P40 billion in revenue.

IHAP president Senen Matoto said the Department of Justice could give a new interpretation of the PD 1869 such that the shares of the gaming firm would still be attractive despite a provision setting aside half of Pagcor's earnings for government projects.

The DOJ had opined in the past that the 50-percent share of the national government in Pagcor's income was based on total revenue and not earnings after expenses.

"We, however, believe that the PD that created Pagcor could not have envisioned that the 50 percent share of government would be based on total revenue since this would not totally disregard the corporate viability of Pagcor," IHAP said in its letter to Romulo.

Matoto explained that the same presidential decree provided that 45 percent of the company could be sold to private investors. This means that Pagcor's viability must have been a primary concern, he pointed out.

During its membership meeting yesterday where Romulo was guest speaker, IHAP stressed that its handling of Pagcor's IPO for the government would be free of charge.

This is the same group that handled the IPO of Petron Corp. in the mid-1990s wherein 40 percent of the country's largest oil refiner was sold to Saudi Aramco.

ERNST & YOUNG EXEC IN MANILA

William Kimsey, Global CEO of Ernst & Young International (EYI), a leading international professional services firm and worldwide business advisor, expressed the global firm's support and confidence in President Macapagal-Arroyo's programs to attract foreign investors to the Philippines during a courtesy call in Malacañang. Looking on is Benjamin Punongbayan, managing partner of the public accounting firm of Punongbayan & Araullo, which represents EYI in the Philippines.

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Anscor to raise stake in IT sector

By Doris C. Dumlao

A. SORIANO Corp. (Anscor), the investment holding company of the Soriano family, is keen on hiking its stake in listed SPI Technologies Inc. and in scouting for other opportunities in the fast growing information technology sector.

"Anscor plans to continue to make selective investments and to realign its portfolio in fields with potential for growth and profitability, such as the IT industry and other areas of endeavor," company chair Andres Soriano III said during the stockholders' meeting yesterday.

Anscor, which has been operating in the red during the last three years, recognizes the need to explore new revenue streams. Soriano assured the stockholders that Anscor would likely return to profitability by next year.

Last year, the company incurred a net loss of P310.9 million, although this was better than the P487.6 million in losses in 1999.

In a separate interview, Anscor chief finance officer Ernest Cuyegkeng said the company, which had some P500-million cash hoard that it could devote to new investments, noted that it would like to make SPI Technologies as its platform to the IT sector.

Cuyegkeng said SPI was keen on venturing into new IT businesses and that Anscor would like to invest in these specific projects.

Anscor acquired a 10-percent stake last year in SPI Technologies, which is engaged in data conversion and e-telecare.

Anscor embarked on a consolidation of its portfolio last year by completing the sale of its investment in AB Capital to the Phinma group. On the other hand, the funds generated from the sale of its stake in Asian Bank were invested in the money market while new ventures were being considered.

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loc. 2436; 2415; 2403

PARTICIPATING UNDERWRITER
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Tel. No. 840-7000

Offering Period
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Issue Date
May 4, 2001

Minimum Investment
P5,000.00

Four-Year Retail Treasury Bonds (RTBs)

1. **What are 4-Year RTBs?**
   These are Government Securities which will mature after 4 years for which coupon or yield shall be paid on a quarterly basis.
2. **Why should an investor invest in RTBs?**
   Because the RTBs are issued by the Republic of the Philippines, they are risk free (payment guaranteed), high yielding, tradeable and affordable.
3. **Who can purchase RTBs?**
   Any investor who has at least P5,000.00 can purchase RTBs. An investor can invest up to a maximum of P2,000,000.00.
4. **How does an investor participate in the Public Offering?**
   The investor fills up an Application to Purchase Form and submits this together with 2 valid IDs and payment. For corporations, copies of Board Resolutions indicating authorized signatories and specimen signatures and the payment are required.
5. **After the Public Offering, can an investor still buy or sell RTBs?**
   Yes, the RTBs can be bought and sold at the secondary market at prevailing market prices.
6. **What are the risks involved in investing in RTBs?**
   Because they are the direct and unconditional obligation of the Republic of the Philippines, RTBs are **RISK FREE** (payment guaranteed).
7. **How much will an investor gain if he invests in RTBs?**
   Actual Computation:

Face Value	P5,000.00
Coupon Rate p.a.	14.25%
Gross Quarterly Coupon	178.12
Less Withholding Tax (20%)	35.62
End Quarterly Coupon	P142.50

8. **What is an investor's proof of ownership?**
   The Investor is given a duly acknowledged copy of the Application to Purchase Form with a Confirmation of Sale (COS).
9. **Where can an investor purchase RTBs?**
   An investor can purchase RTBs from the following Underwriters or any of their branches or business centers.

Why employees hate paying taxes

LABOR MANAGEMENT FORUM

Josephus B. Jimenez

IT could be providential that the deadline for filing income tax returns fell on Resurrection Day. The taxpayers in this country are desperately in need of redemption.

The financial burden in this country is not borne by the lower 50 percent who are extremely poor—they have no income to tax—nor by the 10 percent who are exceedingly rich—they have sophisticated technologies to evade, avoid and altogether circumvent the internal revenue code, thanks to their brilliant CPAs and lawyers. The tax burden heavily falls on the 40 percent salaried and wage-earning middle class who cannot escape from the very retrogressive withholding tax system.

Paying taxes in this country is like being crucified in Golgotta in between two thieves and surrounded by tax collectors, scribes and Pharisees who are in a hurry to gamble on your remaining garments or robes. Taxpayers hate to see the amount of money forcibly exacted from them by a government that they don't trust. They feel angry at the way tax collectors make it difficult for them to give up a big chunk of their paychecks. To a Filipino taxpayer, a tax withheld is virtually taking away food from his children's mouth, taking away tuition money or medicines for the sick. Filing an income tax return is like being held up in broad daylight.

Why we abhor taxation

There are a thousand and one reasons why Filipino taxpayers consider taxation a cruel and unusual punishment. But we can focus on only four. FIRST, taxpayers believe that the tax system in this country is RETROGRESSIVE, not PROGRESSIVE. The amount of taxes to be paid is not dependent on level of income but level of ability to go around the tax code, manipulate the figures and get a good accountant. SECOND, the general sentiment is that our taxes will just be squandered by corrupt politicians and a graft-ridden bureaucracy. THIRD, taxpayers don't get value for their money. The quality of services rendered by the government is disgusting, if not altogether reprehensible. And FOURTH, the system and the people involved in tax collection are NOT taxpayer-friendly.

Retrogressive taxation

The principle of progressive income taxation is that tax burdens must be directly proportionate to the taxpayers' income levels. Progressive taxation is supposed to be a constitutional mandate and a fundamental policy. The facts, however, are a far cry from the desired situation. Tax burdens in this country are dumped on the wage earners.

The businessmen, the practicing lawyers, doctors and accountants don't pay correct taxes. Lawyers, in fact, don't issue receipts for attorney's fees. Most doctors don't issue receipts either for medical bills paid. Neither do dentists, optometrists and accountants. Thus, you will find partners in big law firms in Makati or resident physicians paying less taxes than a salaried middle manager of a small firm or a regional director in the government service.

A culture of corruption

Taxpayers hate paying taxes because they see with their own eyes how government funds are going into the pockets of corrupt politicians and their cronies, paramours and political leaders. They see how budgets for public works projects are being siphoned to private contractors, how government facilities and vehicles are being used for personal purposes, and how bureaucrats in DECS, in DPWH, in DOH and in almost all government offices are favoring suppliers, contractors and influence peddlers in the disbursements of funds.

Taxpayers are exasperated to see their hard-earned money diverted to buy mansions for mistresses in high places. They are disillusioned to hear of government funds used to buy hotels or luxury cars or squandered in junkets abroad by Cabinet members and their families. They feel cheated and robbed by dishonest bureau directors who used public funds in their personal trips and recreations while they, the poor taxpayers can hardly make both ends meet.

No value for money

Theoretically, when taxpayers pay taxes, they are paying for services rendered, good services. In principle, taxpayers are customers who are footing the bill. But that is the theory. The fact is, public service is generally inefficient, if not downright irritating. Public service is delayed, there is no feedback, the people in government are not courteous. No such things as customer-orientation.

There are clerks and underlings in some government offices who treat taxpayers as beggars or holduppers. Security guards are arrogant and overbearing. Telephone operators are discourteous. Receptionists are snobbish and subordinates are cold and insensitive to the needs of a visiting taxpayer. When you transact business in a government office, you have to beg for basic services. You have to explain things that should already be standard operating procedure. And you have to wait, wait, wait, because the signatory is still attending a meeting or taking his snacks.

Not taxpayer friendly

You have to line up to file your income tax return. The office has no ventilation. If the lines are long, you have to sweat it out under the blistering sun or rain showers. Tax collectors don't worry about your condition. You'll get the feeling that all they worry about is how to achieve their revenue target. All that is important is the money they collect. And so, don't ever wonder why Filipinos hate paying taxes. They have all the reasons to be exasperated.

It is indeed providential that the tax deadline falls on Resurrection Day. For we, taxpayers, are in dire need of some sort of resurrection, an experience of being born to a new day, when paying taxes will be a joyful experience to look forward to.

(For comments, you can reach the writer at the following e-mail address: josephus.jimenez@pcppi.com.ph)

ADB warns of oil shocks this year

By Ronnel W. Domingo

THE ASIAN Development Bank yesterday warned developing countries, especially those with large deficits, of risks from volatile oil prices this year.

In an annual forecast released yesterday, the ADB said developing countries were more likely to suffer from higher oil prices.

The Manila-based lender pointed out that manufacturing had been relocated to lower-cost countries, most of which were non-oil producers.

It said industrial countries were now less vulnerable to oil shocks because of their reduced dependence on oil since these had veered away from manufacturing to sectors that had less demand for fuel, like information and communications technology.

However, the bank said higher oil prices were "unlikely to be a cause of concern" for Southeast Asian countries that enjoyed large current account surpluses and subdued inflation.

As of end-2000, the Philippines incurred a current account deficit of about P112 billion while the Macapagal administration projected a deficit of at least P145 billion this year.

Guarantees to cost ₱600B

By Clarissa S. Batino

THE MACAPAGAL administration has inherited sovereign guarantees that will cost the country some P600 billion in the next 20 years, Finance Secretary Alberto Romulo has disclosed.

Romulo told reporters the amount of guarantees and contingent liabilities maturing this year alone would run up to P12 billion.

He said a review of existing laws on guarantees was already being done to determine whether the government could still afford to grant sovereign guarantees or it should stop now.

Analysts said the rising level of expiring sovereign guarantees would make it even more difficult for the government to implement fiscal discipline and achieve a balanced budget in the coming years.

"We are deluged with liabilities from government guarantees that have become actual," Romulo said.

DTI opposes 200% toll hike

THE DEPARTMENT of Trade and Industry wants the Toll Regulatory Board to block a proposed 200-percent increase in toll rates at the South Luzon Expressway until toll road operators improve their operations and maintenance.

In a position paper, the trade department said the TRB should require specific performance commitments from the expressway operators—state-owned Philippine National Construction Corp. and Citra Metro Manila Tollways Corp.—as a condition for any toll rate increase.

Based on the toll rate hike petition of PNCC and Citra, drivers of cars and jeepneys would have to pay P75 from P30; light trucks and passenger buses, P190 from P60; and heavy trucks and equipment, P300 from P90 each time they use the Skyway. PNCC and Citra have also a pending petition for an increase in toll rates for the at-grade section of the expressway from Magallanes to Alabang. The first public hearing for their petition was held in February this year.

Vitarich income plunges 139%

By Christine A. Gaylican

VITARICH Corp., the country's third largest poultry integrator and animal feeds manufacturer, said yesterday pre-tax earnings plunged 139 percent last year to P72 million from 1999's comparative figure.

In an interview, Vitarich president Armando Escobar told the INQUIRER the company's earnings took a dive because of the peso's sharp depreciation against the US dollar.

Vitarich imports most of its raw materials and broilers. Its expenses soared when the peso fell last year from 39 to as low as 56 to a dollar due to political and economic uncertainties that hounded the Estrada administration and a general weakness of Asian currencies.

Escobar reported that Vitarich, a company 100-percent owned by the Sarmiento family, missed its full-year net income target of P100 million.

He said the company was also set back by its inability to dispose of its idle assets and other losing ventures, like its restaurant chain, Texas Chicken.

With 28 stores, Texas Chicken had cost Vitarich some P70 million a year, he said.

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INVITATION FOR PREQUALIFICATION/ELIGIBILITY AND BIDDING

The PNOC - Energy Development Corporation (PNOC-EDC) invites Contractors classified by and registered with the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board (PCAB) as SMALL B in Electrical Works or General Building - Building and Industrial Plants to apply for pre-qualification/eligibility and if subsequently found eligible, to bid for the project:

Supply, Delivery, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of the
NEGROS ORIENTAL Rural Electrification Project
Stage 1 (5 Barangays)
under Bid/Project No. EDC 00-184R

The work calls for the supply of minor materials, labor, supervision, equipment, tools, consumables, and other services necessary to provide electric power supply to the 5 Barangays situated in the Towns of Guihulngan, Jimalalud, Manjuyod, and Tayasan, Negros Oriental.

The pre-qualification/eligibility forms may be secured from the Contracts Administration Group (c/o I. M. Corcuera) starting April 10, 2001, 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday thru Friday upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Hundred Pesos (PHP100.00).

The pre-qualification/eligibility documents must be submitted to the Contracts Administration Group not later than 5:00 p.m. of April 24, 2001.

Bid documents shall be issued to eligible Contractors starting May 9, 2001 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of One Thousand Pesos (PHP1,000.00).

For purposes of clarifying certain issues, a pre-bid conference will be held on May 16, 2001, 8:30 a.m. at the 4th Floor, OK Pension House, Sta. Rosa St., Dumaguete City. Site inspection to follow thereafter.

Sealed bids in three (3) sets shall be received by the Contracts Administration Group at the above address not later than 2:00 p.m. of May 29, 2001 and then to be publicly opened immediately thereafter.

PNOC-EDC reserves the right to reject any or all bids or parts thereof, to waive any informality therein, to accept such bids or to award any part of the work to any bidder(s) whose bid(s) is(are) considered most advantageous to PNOC-EDC

(Sgd.) NAZARIO C. VASQUEZ
President

(PDI - Apr 12 & 20 2001)

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INQUIRER TRiViA

By BONG BARRAMEDA

Shades

Q. Who invented sunglasses?

A. The first means of darkening eyeglasses was smoke tinting, which the Chinese originated before the 15th century. But these darkened lenses were not originally intended to reduce solar glare. For centuries, Chinese judges had routinely worn smoke-colored quartz lenses to conceal their eye expressions in court: their evaluation of evidence as credible or not was to remain secret until the trial's conclusion. Smoke-tinted lenses came to serve also as sunglasses, but that was never their primary function.

Name Game. Ray-Ban. In the 1930s, the US Army Air Corps commissioned the optical firm Bausch & Lomb to produce a highly effective lens that would protect pilots from the dangers of high-altitude glare. Company physicists and opticians perfected a special dark-green tint that absorbed light in the yellow band of the spectrum. They also designed a slightly drooping frame perimeter to maximally shield an aviator's eyes, which repeatedly glanced downward toward a plane's instrument panel. Pilots were issued the glasses at no charge, and the public was soon able to purchase the model that banned the sun's rays, thus the name Ray-Ban aviator sunglasses.

Ooops! Dennis Newton was on trial in 1985 for armed robbery in Oklahoma City. The prosecutor asked one of the witnesses, the supervisor of the store that had been robbed, to identify the robber. When she pointed to the defendant, Newton jumped to his feet, accused the witness of lying, and said, "I should have blown your f----- head off!" After a moment of stunned silence, he added, "If I'd been the one who was there." The jury sentenced Newton to thirty years in person.

WORD WATCH

Mendacious (men day shuhs): not truthful; lying; false.

PDI - - April 20, 2001

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Pre-Qualification meeting is scheduled on **May 3**, at 10:00 AM at Pelco II Main Building, San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga.

All pre-qualified bidders may obtain the necessary bid documents after paying a non-refundable fee of FIVE HUNDRED PESOS (P500.00) Main office at San Roque, Guagua, Pampanga starting **May 4 to May 9, 2001**.

Bidding will be announced later. For additional inquiries, please call the PBAC Secretariat at (045) 900-0474 or 900-0850.

(Sgd) ENER D. PANGAN
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(PDI – April 19, 20 & 21, 2001)

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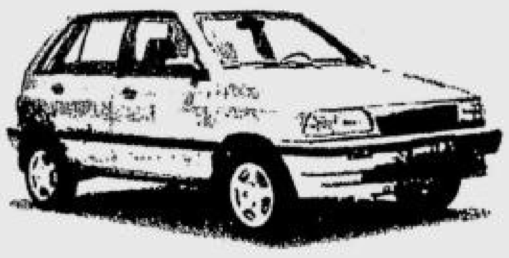

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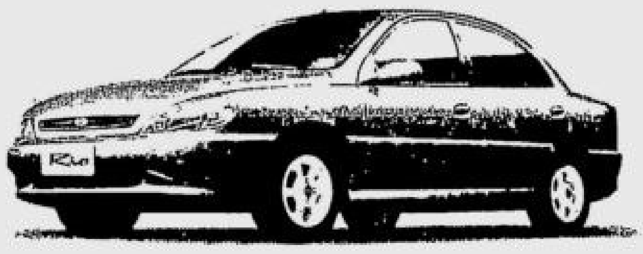

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Maximum Torque (kg-m @ rpm)	12.1 @ 3,000	12.1 @ 4,700	10.3 @ 4,200	10.3 @ 4,000
Rear Defogger	✓	-	-	-
SRP	P439,000	P489,000	P518,000	P518,000

RIO 1.5 HATCHBACK 1500 cc

European design cues with Korean performance soul. 5-door convenience and added cargo space from fold-flat rear seat.

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FEATURES	RIO HB	HCTZ	MSLC
Engine Displacement/ Type	1,493 cc/EFI 16-valve DOHC	1,493 cc/EFI 16-valve SOHC	1,468 cc/ carbureted 12-valve SOHC
Rear seat - fold-flat type	✓	-	-
Driver-side airbag	✓	-	-
SRP	P539,000	P594,000	P620,000

VANS

PREGIO ENTERPRISE

Entry-level commuter for shuttle business, but with trademark all-coil suspension, double aircon, 12-seater capacity.

P580,000 SRP

FEATURES	PREGIO RS	TYHACOM	NUVSHTLE
Engine Displacement/ Type	2,665 cc/OHC	2,446 cc/OHC	2,663 cc/OHV
Overall width (mm)	1,810	1,690	1,690
Suspension type Front	Double wishbone/ coil spring	Double wishbone/ torsion bar	Double wishbone/ torsion bar
Rear	5-link/coil spring	Rigid axle/leaf spring	Rigid axle/leaf spring
SRP	P580,000	P820,000	P750,000

PREGIO FESTIVAL

Plush 12-seat family van or company commuter with all the Pregio limo power controls.

P660,000 MT SRP
P695,000 AT SRP

FEATURES	PREGIO FEST	TYHAGL	NUVESPD
Engine Displacement/ Type	2,665 cc/OHC	1,998 cc/OHC	2,663 cc/OHV
Transmission	5 MT/ 4AT	5 MT	5 MT
Suspension type Front	Double Wishbone/ coil spring	Double Wishbone/ torsion bar	Double Wishbone/ torsion bar
Rear	5-link/coil spring	Rigid axle/leaf spring	Rigid axle/leaf spring
Second row seat-rotating 180°	✓	-	-
SRP	P660,000 MT P695,000 AT	P860,000 MT	P780,000 MT

LIGHT TRUCKS

KC2700 PANORAMIC 4X2 w/ PS

Newest light truck with big ideas, carlike cab, bigger diesel engine, more payload, and power steering.

P480,000 SRP
(w/ Panoramic body)

FEATURES	KC2700 CC	MIT L3 CC
Engine Displacement/Type	2,665 cc diesel	2,477 cc diesel
Maximum Torque (kg-m @ rpm)	17.5 @ 2,400	15 @ 2,000
Overall length (mm)	4,770	4,100
Overall width (mm)	1,750	1,695
Rear body length (ft)	9.5	8
Chassis payload (kg)	1,220	1,140
SRP (Cab Chassis)	P410,000	P435,000

PREMIUM MINI-VAN

CARNIVAL

American-style minivan loaded with plush seating, individual aircon ports, class-leading 135 ps DOHC 16-valve turbo intercooler diesel.

P859,000 MT SRP
P909,000 AT SRP

FEATURES	CARNIVAL	TYHA-GRAN	HYSTARVX
Engine Displacement/ Type	2,902 cc turbo intercooler 16-valve DOHC diesel	2,985 cc OHC diesel	2,476 cc turbo intercooler diesel
Maximum Output (PS @ rpm)	135 @ 3,800	87 @ 4,000	100 @ 3,800
Overall length (mm)	4,930	4,830	4,695
Overall width (mm)	1,895	1,690	1,820
Wheelbase (mm)	2,910	2,590	2,810
Transmission	5 MT/4 AT	5 MT	5 MT/4 AT
Suspension Type			
Front Coil	✓	-	-
Rear Coil	✓	✓	✓
ABS	✓	-	-
Driver-side airbag	✓	-	-
SRP	P859,000 MT P909,000 AT	P1,080,000	P938,000 MT P978,000 AT

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Strong Asian growth in 2002 to follow US slowdown–ADB

TOKYO—Asia will remain at the top of the world growth league and will see a return to the good times by 2002, even if it has to absorb the impact of the slowdown in the US economy, the Asian Development Bank said in its annual forecast published yesterday.

The Manila-based ADB's "Asian Development Outlook 2001," unveiled in Tokyo, predicts growth in the region's developing countries will slow from more than 7 percent in calendar 2000 to 5.3 percent this year before recovering to 6.1 percent in 2002.

The forecast is based on the bank's "relatively sanguine outlook" that global growth is set to experience a "relatively shallow and short-term slowdown" to around 3.5 percent this year from 4.8 percent in 2000, before picking up to almost 4 percent in 2002.

"A deeper and more long-lived slowdown in the US and the uncertain outlook for Japan" are identified in the report as the major risks for the global economy.

"The risks are especially significant for those DMCs (developing member countries of the ADB), where recoveries depend heavily on exports, where financial and corporate restructuring is incomplete and where political uncertainties remain," the report warned.

"The effect of the US slowdown on DMCs will depend heavily on the behavior of intra-regional trade," the report said, noting it had grown significantly over the last decade, "and can play a role in reducing the region's vulnerability to external factors."

The weakness of US demand, which was the engine of the region's spectacular recovery after the 1997 to 1998 economic crisis, will primarily affect the so-called newly industrialized economies—Hong Kong, Singapore, South Korea and Taiwan—and "the countries of Southeast Asia depending heavily on technology exports and on the US market."

The NIEs will see their growth rate fall from 8.4 percent in 2000 to just 4.3 percent this year before rebounding to 5.6 percent next year, according to the ADB's analysis.

South Korea, which is curiously lumped together with the DMCs by the ADB, even though it is a member of the OECD, is forecast to chart the same course, with growth slowing from 8.8 percent in 2000 to 3.9 percent and then 5.5 percent next year.

The current slowdown in the United States will not have the same impact as the 1991 recession, however, the ADB said, since electronic exports from the region will increasingly be composed of components for which global demand remains strong.

The exception will be China and Indonesia, which are still heavily dependent on consumer products, although in China's case, the report makes clear the adverse effect is relative.

"Driven by domestic demand growth, the PRC economy is forecast to slow somewhat but still grow by over 7 percent in 2001 and 2002," it said.

The other regional giant, India, should perform almost as well, the ABD predicted, with growth of between 6 and 7 percent.

The ADB highlighted several reasons for its belief that the current economic situation is fundamentally different from 1997/98, "and that another crisis is, therefore, extremely unlikely." *AFP*

Japan's trade surplus with Asia drops 34.2%

TOKYO—Japan's trade surplus with the rest of Asia dropped 34.2 percent year-on-year in March as growth of Asian-bound exports withered in the face of the US-led global economic slowdown, the finance ministry said yesterday.

Japan's surplus with the region came to 268.5 billion yen ($2.2 billion), with exports rising 4.2 percent to 1,962.4 billion yen and imports jumping a stronger 14.8 percent to 1,693.9 billion yen, the ministry said.

"The growth of Asian-bound exports has stalled since January as the slowdown in the US economy depressed demand in the region," said a ministry official who declined to be named.

"Last year, Japan maintained double-digit gains in exports to Asia. But that is not going to happen in the near future given uncertainty over the US economy."

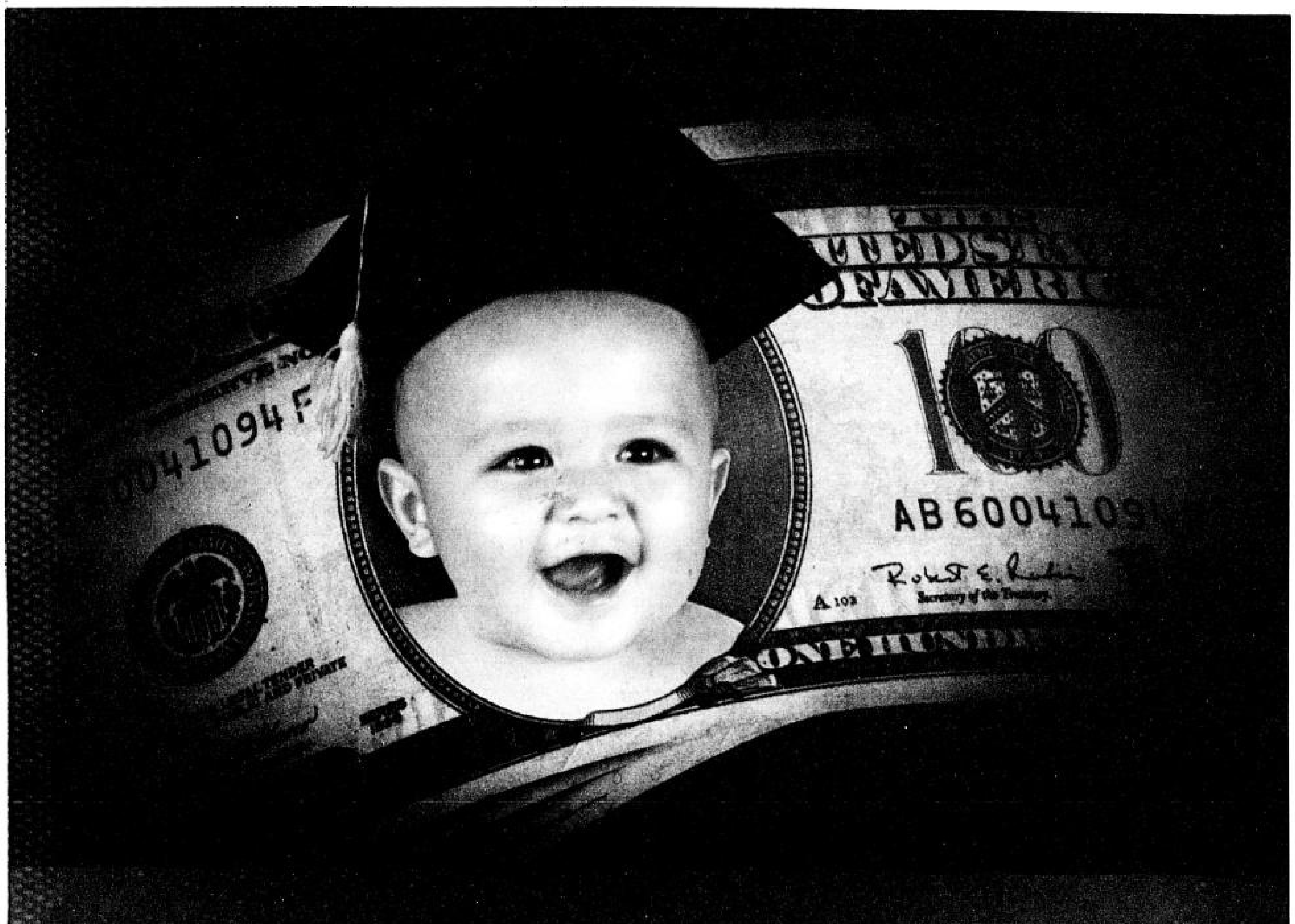
Makoto Ishikawa, senior economist at the Japan Research Institute, agreed.

"The US economic slowdown has been gravely affecting the economy in Asia as companies cut back their investments while their inventories keep rising," Ishikawa said.

The economist pointed out the robust growth in imports underlined the fact that more Japanese companies were producing their products in Asia at cheaper prices and importing them back to Japan.

Among imports from Asia, textile imports rose 21.1 percent year-on-year and semiconductor imports jumped 31.2 percent.

Meanwhile, Japan's overall trade surplus in March fell 17.2 percent from a year earlier to 915 billion yen. *AFP*



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Sony, Ericsson considering cell phone tie-up

TOKYO—Japan's Sony Corp. and Sweden's telecommunications giant LM Ericsson are discussing a possible tie-up of their cell phone operations to expand global market share, according to a Sony spokesman.

"Sony and Ericsson are considering the possibility of business cooperation in the portable phone field, but details are yet to be decided," Sony spokesman Tetsuo Kanno quoted a Sony release as saying.

Earlier, Kanno stopped short of confirming a Japanese news report Thursday morning that the two companies recently reached a basic agreement in which their cell phone businesses will be unified into a yet-to-be established joint venture firm in Britain.

According to the report by public broadcaster NHK television, Sony and Ericsson will also jointly conduct research and development of a next-generation high-speed cellular phone. The network quoted company sources it did not identify.

The report said it would be the first time in the world that leading manufacturing companies separated their core cell phone operations from their parent companies, the report said.

With the tie-up, Sony and Ericsson will aim to reduce cell phone development costs on a third-generation portable phone that can transmit moving images and music, while trying to increase international market share, the report said.

Ericsson, based in Stockholm, sold 40 million cell phones last year, taking a 10-percent global market share and ranking as the No. 3 maker of cell phones in the world, Sony's Kanno said.

Sony's global cell phone market is estimated at about one percent, Kanno said. *AP*

GM wants tax favors before it buys Daewoo

SEOUL—General Motors Corp. is seeking tax favors from the South Korean government as a condition for any takeover of troubled Daewoo Motor Co.

"On the basis of due diligence results, GM is now conducting a review of post-takeover business plans," Jung Keun-Yong, president of the Korea Development Bank, told the National Assembly.

"GM is also having talks with Daewoo Motor on other key issues including labor and taxes accompanying the acquisition," Jung said.

A KDB official said Jung apparently meant GM wanted tax favors from the government.

Jung also told the financial sub-committee of parliament that creditor banks and GM would start full talks once the US automaker finished its review of the viability of any acquisition of Daewoo Motor.

Jung defended the cash lifelines given to Daewoo Motor, which he said were inevitable to prevent a chain of bankruptcies among suppliers and prop up the value of the company until its sale is completed.

Up to the end of March, creditor banks had funneled 419.6 billion won out of 727.9 billion won ($552 million) of financial aid for Daewoo Motor promised in the first half of this year, he said.

The company slipped into crisis after its parent Daewoo Group collapsed in August 1999 under $80 billion of debt.

The troubled automaker has an annual production capacity of 1.06 million vehicles at home and another 875,000 in overseas plants. *AFP*

Apple easily beats market expectations

CUPERTINO, California—Apple Computer on Wednesday reported earnings per share in its second fiscal quarter of 12 cents, down sharply from 64 cents posted in the same period last year but largely eclipsing market expectations of one cent.

The company said net earnings in the quarter came to $43 million, down from the year-earlier quarter.

Sales declined 26 percent to $1.43 billion.

The company said results in the quarter, which ended March 31, included special items without which its net profit would have come to $40 million or 11 cents per share.

Apple shipped 751,000 Macintosh units during the quarter.

Company chief executive Steve Jobs pointed to several new products shipped in the period, including the Titanium PowerBook G4, the Mac OS X operating system and iTunes, which enables a user to create a computer-based music library and to make music CDs.

"Our balance sheet remains very strong, with over $4.1 billion in cash," added Apple chief financial officer Frederick Anderson.

"We now expect to generate $3.2 billion to $3.4 billion in revenues in the second half of the fiscal year, and we are targeting sequential improvements in both revenues and profits in the June and September quarters." *AFP*

Fed cuts rates in rare move between meets

WASHINGTON—The Federal Reserve cut US interest rates to their lowest level in 6-1/2 years on Wednesday, sending stock prices skyward with a surprise show of determination to keep alive the economy's record expansion.

For a second time this year, the US central bank delighted financial markets by aggressively cutting rates a half percentage point between regularly scheduled meetings of its policy-setting Federal Open Market Committee.

As stock markets celebrated, analysts praised the Fed's surprise show of resolve to keep alive the economic expansion, which has continued since the last recession in 1990-91. The move showed the central bank's mounting concern that businesses were cutting spending so steeply that the economy was at risk of falling into recession.

In a statement explaining its relatively rare step, the Fed said economic conditions still were tilted toward weakness—a clear signal that it would cut rates again if necessary. The Fed's next scheduled FOMC meeting is on May 15 and another rate reduction is widely anticipated then.

A poll by Reuters on Wednesday of top Wall Street firms found 24 out of 25 expected another interest-rate reduction at the conclusion of the May 15 meeting. Fifteen firms forecast a half percentage point cut, seven expected a quarter percentage point, and two thought either size of cut was equally likely.

The latest Fed action, taken after an early morning conference call between Fed Chair Alan Greenspan and other FOMC members, brings the federal funds overnight bank lending rate down to 4.5 percent—its lowest level in more than 6-1/2 years. That was just before the Fed raised the fed funds rate to 4.75 percent in August 1994.

The more symbolic discount rate on Fed loans to banks will fall to 4 percent.

Stock markets, already rallying before the move, soared on the news that borrowing and investment costs would fall. The Dow Jones industrial average zoomed up 399.10 points to close at 10,615.83 while the high-tech laden Nasdaq composite index jumped 156.22 points to 2,079.44.

The last time the Fed changed rates between scheduled meetings of its policymaking FOMC was on Jan. 3. It has cut interest rates four times this year—twice at regular FOMC sessions and twice between scheduled meetings—for a total of two full percentage points.

The latest rate reductions should ripple swiftly through the economy. Major banks, including Bank of America, Wells Fargo & Co., Bank One Corp. and JP Morgan Chase & Co. Inc., announced within hours of the Fed announcement that they would lower their prime rates for their most creditworthy corporate borrowers to 7.5 percent from 8 percent. *Reuters*

IBM reports 15% jump in net earnings

ARMONK, New York—International Business Machines on Wednesday matched market expectations, announcing earnings per share of 98 cents and a 15-percent jump in first quarter net profit to $1.75 billion compared with the same period last year.

Earnings per share came to 83 cents in the January-to-March 2000 quarter.

Quarterly sales at the computer maker rose 8.8 percent to $21.044 billion compared to first quarter 2000.

"The momentum we saw building in the latter part of 2000 continued in the first quarter of 2001," said IBM chair Louis Gerstner.

"In the face of weakening economic conditions, the validity of the strategies we put in place over the last five years was underscored time and time again. Looking forward, we are no better than others in predicting how the current economic uncertainty will unfold. IBM is certainly not immune to broad cutbacks in customer spending. However, based on recent results, we expect we will outperform most of our competitors in whatever market emerges this year."

In the Americas, first-quarter revenues were $9 billion, an increase of 6 percent from the 2000 period.

Revenues from Europe/Middle East/Africa came to $5.6 billion, up 3 percent, while sales in the Asia-Pacific region increased 8 percent to $4.3 billion.

In the original equipment segment, revenues increased 48 percent to $2.1 billion compared with the first quarter of 2000.

Hardware revenues rose 11 percent to $8.5 billion from the 2000 first quarter while those at IBM Global Services, including maintenance, grew 12 percent $8.5 billion.

Gerstner acknowledged that "not all the news was good in the quarter," citing specifically problems in the desktop computer business.

"The desktop segment is hurting—and it is not just a cyclical issue," he said. "This is a mature business and it no longer drives the economics of the information technology industry."

He added that IBM's hard disk drive and display businesses also turned in a weak first quarter. *AFP*

AUSTRALIA-FAMILY GETAWAYS ON SINGAPORE AIRLINES

If Down Under is your top priority vacation spot this summer, then here's news from Singapore Airlines that will make you hop with joy! It is about their exciting holiday package very aptly called AUSTRALIA-FAMILY GETAWAYS! The new promotion, which runs from March 22 until May 31, 2001, gives you four lovely Australian destinations to choose from – Sydney, Melbourne, Brisbane and Gold Coast

A most ideal getaway for the family, the tour package with a real bargain price starting from US$3,198, covers two adults and one child. It includes roundtrip economy class airfare, hotel accommodation for three nights, roundtrip airport shuttle transfers, an energy-packed daily breakfast before you go on your two choices of full-day tours that are guaranteed to give you a splendid glimpse of the beauty and diversity of Australia plus half-day city sights.

Swinging Sydney has a variety of sightseeing tours to pick from. Enjoy the great outdoors for one whole day at the breathtaking Blue Mountain and at the awesome Australian Wildlife Park. Or for a truly unique Aussie experience, visit the historic Gledswood Farm which dates back to the year 1810 and see dogs work on a flock of sheep, a stockman shearing sheep, spectacular colonial gardens and delight in some wine-tasting before a real sumptuous Barbecue Lunch. Or check out the famous Sydney Harbor, which is still the best way to see Sydney, via the Captain Cook Luncheon Cruise – get a stunning view of the Harbour Bridge and the bustling al fresco cafes and outdoor pubs. Or catch the best in entertainment, shopping and dining at the city and at the FOX Studios where you can experience what it is like in the movie world.

The Gold Coast Package gives you the chance of swimming with dolphins and sharks in SeaWorld, feeling like a movie star in Movie World or for more fun than you'll ever have, you can visit Dreamworld's 12 themed worlds that will amuse and amaze you.

While in Melbourne, relive the history and excitement of Victoria's goldrush days at Sovereign Hill. The place is alive with miners panning for real gold. Main Street bustles with characters dressed in costume of the period. And you can take a ride through the streets in a horse-drawn carriage! There are shops, hotels, schools, a theatre, crafts, steam-driven machinery, working plant and an underground mine, all known to have existed in Ballarat during the 1850s. The Great Ocean Road, on the other hand, features everything from beautiful surf beaches, serene bays and inlets to rugged cliffs, huge rocky outcrops and lush rainforest.

For those who love the feel of sand in their toes and riding the waves, Gold Coast / Brisbane is the place to be. The Sunshine Coast offers miles and miles of beachfront where you can frolic under the heat of the Australian sun. For those who love the outdoors, Mt Tamborine, Springbrook, Tropical Fruitworld and Paradise Country gives you breathtaking views of waterfalls, rainforests and an extensive range of native plants growing side by side with exotic fruit and flowering trees. Then there is the famous SeaWorld, MovieWorld or Dreamworld's 12 themed parks, all of which will surely amaze and amuse the family.

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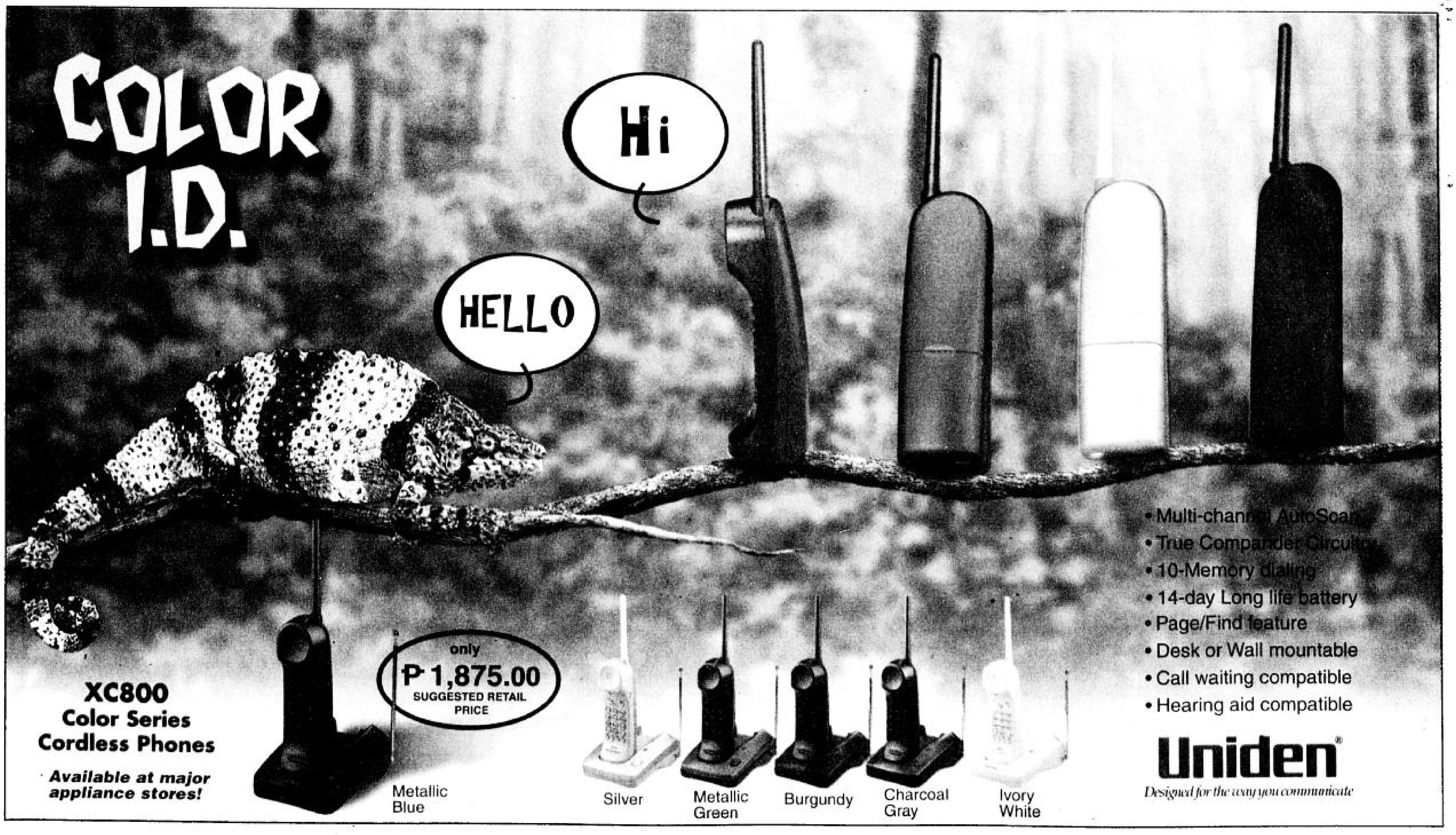

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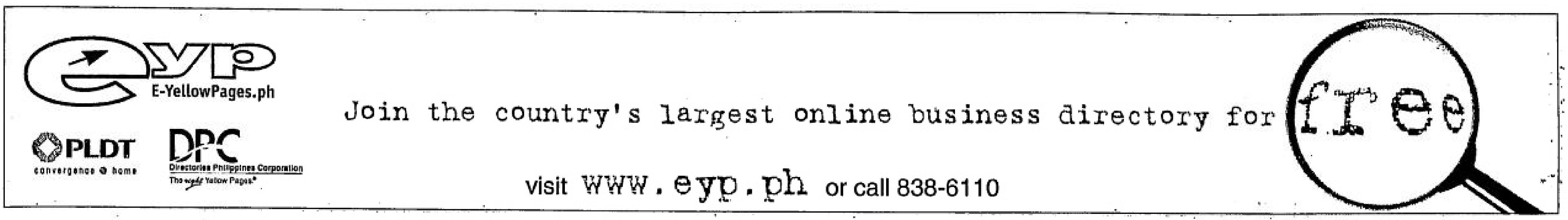
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BF HOMES, INC.

announce with deep sorrow the untimely demise of its Corporate Secretary

ATTY. ANTONIO V. AGCAOILI

who peacefully joined our Lord on April 17, 2001.

Our condolences and sincerest sympathies to his family, relatives and friends. We request all readers to join us in prayer for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Capilla de San Francisco, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be on April 21, 2001 at the Manila Memorial Park after the 9:30 a.m. Mass at the Capilla del Señor, Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

GREGORIO B. BONDOC

(Tatang Yoyong)

November 30, 1923 -- April 19, 2001

of San Fernando, Pampanga

Died peacefully in the Grace of the Lord at the age of 77.

His wife **AURELIA** (Imang Eliang) **MALLARI**; children **VILMA** and **NICANOR DELA CRUZ**; **THELMA** and **GUS VILLALUNA**; **EDGARDO** and **MA. THERESA PRINCIPE**; grandchildren **MICHAEL JAMES** and **MARIA JANINA**, **LUANNE CARLA**, **TRISTAN JOSEF**, **MARIA ELISA** and **ANNA FELICIA**; brothers and sisters **JOSE** (†), **ILUMINADA**, **LUCILA**, **JULIO** and **OLIVIA**; relatives and friends request to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Good Shepherd Memorial Chapels.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 21, 2001 after the 4:00 p.m. Mass at the Good Shepherd Memorial Park, Dolores, City of San Fernando, Pampanga.

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ILL. RAYMOND E. WILMARTH, 33°

Past Sovereign Grand Commander

Who died at 5:55 p.m. on April 18, 2001 at the age of 91.

He is survived by his children and grandchildren.

We request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at the Chapel, 2nd Floor, Main Building, St. Luke's Medical Center, Quezon City and at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday, April 21, 2001 will be transferred to the Cathedral of St. Mary & St. John at St. Luke's Medical Center. Scottish Rite Funeral Service will be held at noontime of Friday, April 20, 2001 at St. Luke's Medical Chapel.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 21, 2001 at the Holy Cross Cemetery, Quezon City after the 7:30 a.m. Holy Mass.

MOTHER MERCEDES PASTOR LLANDERAL, O.P.

Co-Foundress of the Congregation of the Dominican Sisters of St. Joseph

joined her Beloved Creator on Easter Tuesday, April 17, 2001 at the age of 89, the 42nd year of her religious life

The Superior General, the sisters and her brother, Jesus invite the readers to be one in prayerful thanks to the Lord for the gift of her fruitful life.

Her body lies in state at Bethany Orphanage, Tabe, Guiguinto, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Saturday, April 21, 2001 at Krus sa Wawa Memorial Park in Barihan, Malolos, Bulacan after the 2:00 p.m. Mass to be presided by Bishop Rolando J. Tria Tirona, O.C.D.

NEMESIA DEGRACIA LORES

Widow of Ramon Lores, Sr.
of Sta. Maria, Ilocos Sur and Quezon City

Peacefully joined her Creator on April 18, 2001 at the age of 83.

Her bereaved family **Rex**, **Ramon**, **Edgar**, **Norma** (†); daughters-in-law, **Abigail**, **Violy**, and **Mercy**; grandchildren and great grandchildren; sisters and brothers; nephews, nieces, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her body lies at Arlington Memorial Chapels, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on April 22, 2001, after an 8 a.m. Mass at Manila Memorial Park, Parañaque.

In Loving Memory
on the 1st Death Anniversary
of

AGUSTIN M. TOLENTINO

who passed away on April 20, 2000

Holy Masses will be offered on the following Churches on April 20, 2001:

St. Joseph Parish	*Tambo, Pque*	6:00 AM
Sta. Cruz Church	*Sta. Cruz, Manila*	6:15 PM
Shrine of Our Lady of Manaoag	*Pangasinan*	7:00 AM
St. John the Baptist	*Quiapo*	7:00 AM
Nuestra Señora de Guia	*Ermita*	8:00 AM
Basilica of Immaculate Concepcion	*Manila Cathedral, Intramuros*	12:10 NN
Our Lady of Remedios Parish	*Malate*	6:00 AM
Makati Medical Center	*Makati*	7:00 AM
Visito ng Sto. Cristo	*Pulilan, Bulacan*	4:45 PM
St. Alphonsus de Liguori	*Magallanes, Makati*	6:00 PM
Shrine of the Most Holy Rosary	*Sto. Domingo*	6:00 PM
Shrine of Jesus the Way, the Truth, & the Light	*Edsa Ext. Reclamation Area*	5:30 PM
Our Lady of Mt. Carmel	*Lipa City*	6:00 AM

We know
that God
raised the
Lord
Jesus
from
death.
He will
raise us
to life
with
Jesus. He
will
present
us, along
with you,
to God.

2 Cor. 4:14

Our Dearly Beloved

Lena Reyes Abadilla

Peacefully joined our Creator on April 17, 2001 at the age of 81.

Her loving children **Toots**, **Baby**, **Willy**, **Sue**, **Dindo**, **Mallie**, **Ernie**, **Babes** and **Rainier**; grandchildren; great-grandchildren; sisters **Ched**, **Mellie**, **Nancy**, **Clemen**; relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at St. Paul's Parish Church, SSS Village, Marikina City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 22 at the Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City.

THE AUGUSTINIAN SISTERS
OF OUR LADY OF CONSOLATION
ANNOUNCE THE DEATH
OF

SISTER NIEVES SUALIBIAS SIPACIO, O.S.A.

On April 19, 2001 at the age of 93.

Funeral Mass will be on April 20, 2001 at the La Consolacion Convent Chapel, 273 Santolan Road, San Juan, Metro Manila.

Interment will follow at the La Loma Cemetery after the 8:00 a.m. Mass.

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Our Dearly Beloved

Bro. Manuel M. Pagkalinawan

Knights of Columbus, Diego Silang, Council 7656

Peacefully joined our Lord on April 18, 2001 at the age of 55.

His brothers **Tony**, **Bobbie** and **Rene**; sisters **Didi**, **Menchu** and **Sarah**; in-laws, nieces, nephews and friends request all pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

His remains lie in state at Nacional Memorial Homes (Chapel 2-B) 264 G. Araneta Avenue, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Sunday, April 22, 2001 at the Loyola Memorial Park, Marikina after the 8:00 a.m. Holy Mass.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.
Always caring... INQUIRER OBITUARIES
Call us at 897-2535

Salvador “Bubby” Dacer

Born April 12, 1934
Lived a life of service to country and people
Disappeared on November 24, 2000
Found the earth has claimed his limbs on April 11, 2001

His grieving parents Emiliana and Celedonio; sister Erlina; children Emily, Sabina and Chelen Reyes, Carina, Ampy and Bobby Henson; granddaughter Denise Gabrielle Reyes; in-laws and relatives request the pious readers to pray that he may live in eternal peace and joy.

We invite all his friends to celebrate his life and work in a memorial service to be held on Saturday, April 21, 2001, 1:00 p.m. at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

“I shall pass this way but once; any good or kindness therefore
that I can do for my fellowmen, let me not defer nor neglect it,
for I shall not pass this way again...”

Please omit flowers.

Donations to the Truth and Justice Fund (TJF)
for Bubby and Awel are most welcome.
For more inquiries, please call 0917-4661411

Emmanuel “Awel” Corbito

Born May 9, 1952
Disappeared on November 24, 2000
Found dead on April 11, 2001

His grieving wife Elnora Corbito; children Noralyn, Norwel, and Diana Manuel; brothers and sisters Placido and Grace, Celeste and Job Teoxon, Salvador and Gina, and Cielito C. Uriarte, and other relatives request the pious reader to pray that he may live in eternal peace and joy.

We invite all his friends to celebrate his life in a memorial service to be held on Saturday, April 21, 2001, 1:00 p.m. at the Santuario de San Antonio, Forbes Park, Makati City.

Interment will be announced later.

Please omit flowers.
Donations to the Truth and Justice Fund (TJF) for Bubby and Awel are most welcome.
For more inquiries, please call 0917-4661411

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BIR implements rule on TCCs

By Jose Leonilo V. Didulo
SGV & Co.

TAX-FILES

THE BUREAU of Internal Revenue issued Revenue Memorandum Circular No. 18-2001 on April 6, 2001 authorizing the Assistant Commissioner for Collection Service to approve and sign the transfer and revalidation of tax credit certificates.

With the concurrence of the Assistant Commissioner for Financial and Administrative Office, the former is also given the authority to effect the conversion of tax credit certificates to cash.

This will allow taxpayers to sell and realize cash on its unused TCCs, and for the buyer to apply the TCC against its direct internal revenue tax liabilities.

Revalidation, assignment and transfer of TCC

On July 19, 2000, the BIR issued Revenue Regulation No. 5-2000 allowing the assignment and transfer of BIR-issued TCCs.

The regulations allow a one-time assignment or transfer of the TCC to be used by the assignee/transferee in the payment of its direct internal revenue tax liabilities such as income tax, documentary stamp tax, excise tax, value added tax, percentage tax and other internal revenue taxes. The TCCs, however, cannot be used in payment of the following:

- payment or remittance of any kind of withholding tax
- payment arising from the availment of tax amnesty declared under a legislative enactment
- payment of deposits on withdrawal of excisable articles
- payment of taxes not administered or collected by the BIR
- payment of compromise penalty

Taxpayers with BIR-issued TCCs in their name hold the same in the concept of an owner and may be transferred in favor of an assignee subject to the conditions that the transfer must be with prior approval of the Commissioner or his duly authorized representative who shall verify whether or not the TCC sought to be transferred is still valid in the hands of the original holder, the transfer should be limited to one transfer only, and the transferee shall use the TCC assigned to him strictly in payment of his direct internal revenue tax liability and in no case shall the same be available for conversion to cash in his hands.

Existing TCCs, however, which remain unutilized after five years from the date of issue should be revalidated before the end of the fifth year, otherwise, it will be rendered invalid and the unutilized amount shall revert to the General Fund of the National Government. An application for revalidation may be filed with the Collection Service or other duly authorized Office of the Bureau of Internal Revenue before the lapse of the five-year period.

Procedures on the sale of TCCs

Based on pending applications filed with the BIR, the Bureau requires the submission of the following documents:

1. Notarized Deed of Sale
2. Original copy of the TCC
3. Board Resolution from the Seller and Buyer authorizing an officer to effect the sale of TCC
4. Certificate of Authenticity of the office which issued the TCC
5. Tax clearance or Certificate of non-tax liability issued by the Revenue District Office having jurisdiction over the Buyer

Once the application is approved by the Bureau, the original TCC will be canceled and a new TCC will be issued in the name of the Buyer. In case only a portion of its face value is transferred or assigned, a new TCC(s) shall be issued representing the respective portions pertaining to the transferee(s) and/or the balance remaining for the account of the transferor.

To effect the application of the TCC against its internal revenue tax liabilities, the buyer will then apply for the issuance of a Tax Debit Memo and file its tax return with the BIR.

In case the TCC originated from the DOF One-Stop-Shop, an initial TDM will have to be secured from the DOF before a TDM will be issued by the BIR Collection Programs Division. It is only then that the TCC will be applied against the internal revenue tax liability of the buyer.

Innovative promos relevant to buyers

PROMOTIONAL activities are mechanisms utilized by big companies to add value to their product, build customer loyalty and boost sales.

If a promo is to succeed in accomplishing these, it has to be hinged on consumer insights which reveal what they deem relevant. Of all the promos by competing brands that have battled for the public's attention, few come close to the magnitude and success of the promotional activities and campaigns launched by Coca-Cola.

The most recognized commercial trademark owes its worldwide predominance to, first, the strength of its product—quite simply, Coca-Cola is a drink which needs no introduction. Second, a well-organized, dedicated and all-pervasive distribution network throughout the world. The third factor to have contributed to Coca-Cola's popularity, which is most noteworthy in today's competitive market, is the consecutive successes and innovative nature of its campaigns and promos.

"We make sure that our promotions are designed to be strategically relevant and reflective of our market's aspirations, innovative and exciting to pin. These are always based on consumer insights and a clear understanding of their current needs so that we continue to add value and give them more reasons to enjoy Coca-Cola," said Nolet Puno, Coca-Cola deputy division marketing director. Coca-Cola promos have become commercial benchmarks that virtually make conventional promos a thing of the past.

In 1999, the "Coca-Cola Cards" promo drove consumers to a frenzy, when it distributed 30 million cards—enough for almost half the population of the country. The stylishly designed Coca-Cola Cards entitled consumers to get great value discounts at leading food establishments nationwide, plus a chance to win millions of pesos in cash and house and lot properties.

This was followed by "Pamaskong Payaman," another promo that gave away millions in cash everyday via a unique growing pot scheme, while Coca-Cola "Star-Trip Enjoy" rewarded loyal patrons with a chance to fulfill their dreams by living like a star for a day. Winners were treated to first-class accommodations, limousine service and shopping sprees and parties. And then there was "Tansan Mania" which created a craze in the Greater Manila Area with millions worth of instant cash and raffle cash prizes to Coca-Cola drinkers.

Companies . . .

(From page B14)

value competitor like Eight O'Clock came to the picture, they had to bring their prices down because the customers were no longer willing to pay a premium like they used to," Go says.

The key is in the proper marketing strategy, which means "the process of continuously and profitably satisfying target customer's needs, wants and expectation in a way that is superior to competition," he adds.

Customers needs, he says, have definitely changed in the past years. There is a change in the lifestyle of consumers as more women enter the labor market and most households have double-income families.

There is also the trend toward environment-friendly products and services, mobility, more choices and lower prices.

"The bottom line for companies is to look for the reason for their existence given the change in the profile of consumers. Because there are many choices in the market, a company should be able to show the customer why they should patronize their product or service," he says.

He recommends that companies should be more focused. It is all right to do only one thing, if you do that one thing better than everyone else.

"I don't think the former model of being too diversified is valid. Being focused means providing more value to customers because you are attuned to what they want and what they need," he says.

Beef . . .

(From page B14)

Even the DA has been comfortable with the safety levels of meat imports that it has disbanded an interagency committee looking into the mad cow scare. "We can only tell our customers that our meat products are safe as they come from Australia which has the highest disease-free status among all countries," Buencamino says.

Pampi currently imports 65 percent of its needs from Australia-New Zealand with the rest coming from the US, Canada and India.

Buencamino says it was only last year that Pampi jacked up its importation from Europe (to as much as 20 percent of imports) when then Agriculture Secretary Edgardo Angara prodded them to cut their imports from Australia in retaliation for its ban on certain Philippine fruit imports.

"He (Angara) did not sign our permits to import from Australia," Buencamino said. With the resumption of normal trade ties between the Philippines and Australia, Buencamino says meat processors have gone back to their normal import sources.

Buencamino urges the public to be more discerning on what the media feeds them. "They should not be swept by the media hype."

He also notes that the hardest hit by mad cow and FMD scare is the local livestock suppliers. "Their sales are down by as much as 70 percent to 80 percent which I think is ironic because they should be enjoying a sales boom because of the Euro ban."

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BUSINESS*Friday*

MARGIE QUIMPO-ESPINO, Business Features Editor

Companies, look at why you exist

By Tina Arceo-Dumlao

PROPER marketing strategy means continuously and profitably satisfying target customer's needs, wants and expectation in a way that is superior to competition.

MOBILE commerce, greater competition, globalization and inflation have contributed to making most working people spend more time working than ever before.

Marketing professor Josiah Go says the dizzying pace of life in the cities is a breeding ground for new business ventures that ironically, feed on the career person's hidden desire to just lay back, relax and do nothing.

Spas and health clubs. Go says this is the reason why spas and health clubs have sprouted like mushrooms in Metro Manila. These spas and clubs provide services like aromatherapy, various types of massages with foot massage as one of the most sought after services.

This is why beauty parlors have evolved into more than just places to get haircuts from. Clients want more than to have a trim. They want facials, hair treatments, a massage. Manicures and pedicures are more popular than ever.

"We look at the market and see that people now take their discretionary time very seriously. They want to really get a good service during the few hours that they have set aside for relaxation," Go says.

Travel. Go expects the travel business will likewise pick up in the coming months especially when the local economy picks up and the peso value strengthens versus the dollar.

"Because they work hard all year long, people want to reward themselves. We already see a lot of Filipinos going out of the country not to work but to get a quick tour of a foreign land. Some also choose to go around the country. The point is that they take their extra time very seriously," he says.

Health food. The health food business is another high growth industry in the new millennium, Go says, as people have also become more conscious about their health because they want to live longer.

This trend is seen in the proliferation of network companies selling vitamins and food supplements that claim to contribute to a well-balanced diet. There are also companies that sell pills that supposedly burn fat, or make one lose weight without exercise and diet.

Go emphasizes that companies should be conscious of new trends—such as offering a healthy lifestyle—to penetrate the crowded business world. Existing firms, on the other hand, need to be on the lookout for changing customers needs and requirements.

"There was a time for instance when Tang can still sell its orange juice drink at a premium. But when a low-cost but high-

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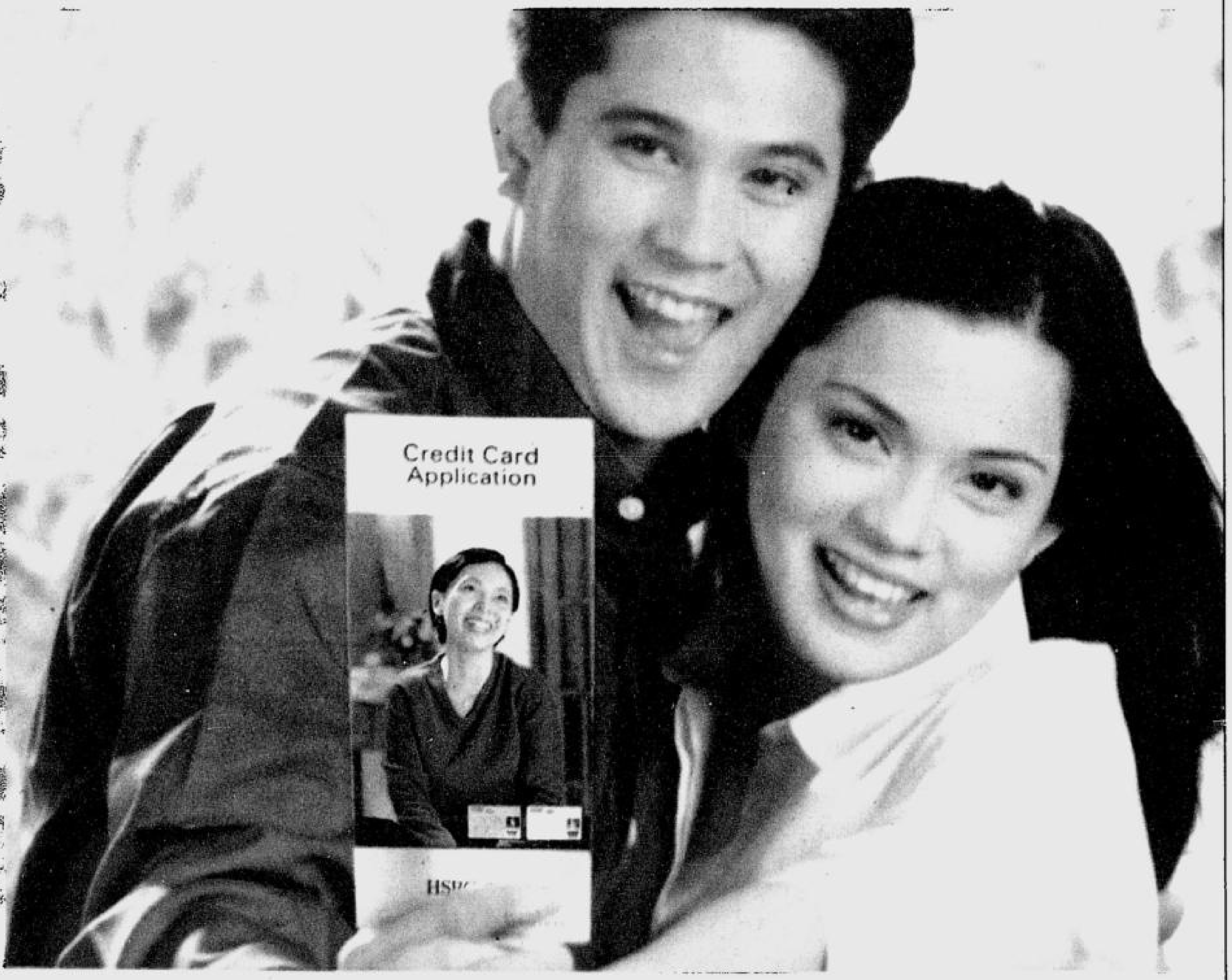

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BUENCAMINO

Beef producers find hard sell does not work

By Gil C. Cabacungan Jr.

MAKERS of hotdogs, corned beef and other processed meat products have come to realize that the direct, hard sell approach does not work on the thundering herd of consumers spooked by the mad cow and foot-and-mouth diseases.

Philippine Association of Meat Processors Inc. executive director Francisco J. Buencamino says that when some of the group's members mounted aggressive marketing campaigns to regain market confidence (such as claiming that their beef and pork inputs come from disease-free Australia), this strategy backfired as their sales slumped even further.

When newspapers and broadcast networks began bombarding the public of reports that contaminated meat products from Europe have been shipped into the country, Buencamino says industry sales immediately slipped by 10 percent to 20 percent.

But when the meat processors decided to take the bull by the horns, sales plummeted even deeper by 20 percent to 30 percent. Buencamino says: "The more we hard sell, the more cynical the public becomes. What can we do when this mad cow and FMD scare is a worldwide problem? Luckily, we realized this early on."

Buencamino says the industry was likewise fortunate that the sales slump happened during the Lenten season when this predominantly Catholic country goes on fasting and meat-less days.

Indirect approach

Buencamino says the industry players decided to change gears by going the indirect route. "We just have to wait for the issue to die down because people will still eat beef for their main protein source. We decided to keep up our information campaign without the hard sell."

The group and its individual members have stepped up separate but coordinated information dissemination campaigns to calm down a jittery public which Buencamino claimed was fed by a lot of bull by the media.

"It all boils down to a problem of misinterpretation and miscommunication. The media created all this hype and the public overreacted," Buencamino said.

The scare started when a shipment of beef arrived in Cebu from Europe more than a month ago when the Department of Agriculture had already banned all beef imports coming from 13 countries in Europe.

Buencamino says the public failed to see through all the negative news that the shipment was ordered in November when the Euroban was not yet in effect; the beef imports were granted an International Veterinarians Quarantine Clearance; and that the cargo was rejected and re-exported.

He stresses that there was no conclusive evidence that shipment was tainted with mad cow disease; and there was only suspicion that the meat was tainted. "It is very difficult to check if a meat is infected with the disease which usually affects certain parts of the cow, such as the brain, eyes and bone marrow. We don't import these parts."

BEEF/ B13

LIFESTYLE

CHELO BANAL-FORMOSO, Editor ■ MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ, Subsection Editor

Trend Spotting

Feel Life.
"And get a chance to win a million."

There's summer away from Boracay

LIFE-STYLED

Thelma Sioson San Juan

I DISCOVERED the best vacation strategy during the Lenten break—I stayed away from this summer's happening-place Boracay, where almost everybody was; or from Baguio, where half of everybody was; or Tagaytay, where what's left of everybody was.

What's obvious again this summer is that Hong Kong has been delisted from the Pinoy's priority destinations for the simple reason that to chronic shoppers, "Hong Kong" is now already in all "*tiangges*," which are even cheaper. Instead Filipinos are rediscovering their appetite for local discoveries—the less explored the more chic. For instance, Pagudpud in the north, where **Maurice Arcache**, **Philip Cu-unjieng**, **Pepper Teehankee** and company were, is getting to be a good lure. Bohol, with its churches and beaches, is suddenly exotic.

To us rat-racers who just want to get off the fast lane briefly, vacation is a state of mind as much as it is of the body (and of the pocket). Its success depends on how well you empty your mind of work and stress, of friends and foes. Mental letting-go is harder to achieve than physical getaway. Just keep still.

> To us rat-racers, vacation is a state of mind, as much as it is of the body and pocket

Back to fiction

In our case, it began with staying put at home and couch-potatoing it in bed where your sole activity is pressing the remote control. It is letting your mind wander away from corporate deadlines and balance sheets—back to fiction, the ultimate escape.

We gobbled up the fare denied us during the daily grind—**Armistead Maupin**'s "Tales of the City," **Candace Bushnell**'s "4 Blondes," **Zadie Smith**'s "White Teeth." We shuttled between the comic decadence of pre-AIDS San Francisco (Armistead was a cult read and TV series), and the romance, sex and power angst of Manhattan, and the cross-cultural poignancy of London, via these three bestsellers.

It was a varied mental travel interrupted only by our daily adrenalin rush in the tennis court. Read, tennis, read, tennis—that's the best luxury we thank God for. Sloth well deserved.

Then on Good Friday, we made our token summer trip, for only a day. We drove to Villa Escudero in Quezon with friends who wanted to be updated on Lenten rituals. With **Jimmy Laya**, the NCCA chair (whose position is always coveted by women) and head of one of the country's biggest accountancy and management firms, author **Ramon Villegas**, leading music educator Dean **Ramon Santos**, Prof. **Felipe de Leon Jr.** and College of St. Benilde's teacher **Toto de la Cruz**, we watched **Ado Escudero**'s annual labor of love, the Good Friday procession in San Pablo City.

More alluring

For us, Villa Escudero was a rediscovery. The last time we were there ages ago, we saw this coconut *hacienda* as a typical native resort whose carabao-drawn shuttles were attractive more to foreigners than to us locals. We were surprised that now its much-improved scenery is more alluring even to us jaded Pinoys.

The vegetation has grown so lush and varied, from the vast plantation of coconut trees and fruit trees to the flora and ornamentals, the ferns, bromeliads and rare plants. It's obvious that it has come under careful planning the past few years—a fact confirmed by movie director **Don Escudero**, who said that his family has tapped **Dr. Bautista** of UP Los Baños to develop the natural landscape. The lake made familiar in so many pictorials, where people paddle adrift on bamboo rafts, is even more beautiful now because it's hemmed by the greenery that has grown naturally wild.

Nature as tourist attraction

The scenery gives you pride of place, reminding you of how rich and varied Philippine vegetation is. It should be of interest not only to local and foreign tourists but also to those who want to learn more about Philippine plants and flora—a curiosity that Villegas suggested the resort can help encourage among us Filipinos. It should reassure us that our country can still breed nature, not only politicians.

The museum is now housed in a vast church in the estate. Even for us second-timers, its collection continues to awe not so much for its antiquity as for its wild variety—from religious icons to old diggings to lifestyle trappings and fashions. Its charm lies precisely in the fact that it's not under strict curatorship. As Don said, his grandparents, **Arsenio** and **Rosario Escudero**, who were clearly ahead of their era not only for their fortune but also for their far-flung interests, collected everything. Thus it was not surprising to see among the collection even the matriarch's evening bags and shoes from the '40s and '50s, and silver coin clips.

One item made me, with another hungry-for-learning member of the group, turn back to give the museum a second look—a very old penis ring. A most un-Holy Week find but we couldn't pass up the chance.

New twist to a tradition

Of interest to young couples should be the Wedding Center—a new cluster of pavilions, which I think gives a new twist to local flavor. A short walk away from each other are the chapel, a cozy spread for cocktails, and a bigger area for the reception—separate structures linked by the natural lush setting. They make for a visual feast which, with the couple's sophisticated handling, can make a native wedding chic. When **Patis Tesoro** holds her son **Joel**'s wedding here this month, we'll see if this will start a trend in a different sort of Filipiniana wedding.

(Speaking of weddings, **Joe Salazar**, who's doing **Charlene Gonzales**' bridal gown, is pleasantly surprised to discover that his famous bride has a safe, conservative taste. The sexy numbers she wears on her dance show do not reflect her character at all, she insists. Instead she wants to look very classic and simple on her wedding. So Joe's design is clean, contemporary—no Filipiniana for Charlene—with only a whiff of pink.)

The ancestral home is also worth a tour—an educational enjoyment especially for the young ones in our group, Dean Santos' post-teen daughters **Monica** and **Wayn** and Professor De Leon's **Wana** who's not even 10.

We also discovered the Villa's coco jam, bought a bottle—the best we've tasted, especially with hot *pan de sal*.

We hardly got to talk to Ado but we saw nonetheless how the Good Friday procession has remained his obsession. There were 45 *carrozas*—enough to draw urbanites like **Katrina Legarda** (who's starting a TV show with **Randy David**), **Larry Leviste**, **Robert Borja**, **Offie Recto** to this part of town this time of year.

In sheer number, grandeur and ornamentation, this procession far surpassed the Good Friday processions I grew up to in my mother's hometown in Obando, Bulacan. There I looked forward to seeing the family's ancestral Pieta take its grand place in the procession, rivaling the beauty of another clan's Mater Dolorosa. It was a subliminal competition I eagerly awaited as a child. Since the *carrozas* and *santos* are family heirlooms, Good Friday processions in traditional provinces make good indicators of each clan's balance sheets—the ebb and rise of family fortunes through the decades.

Such is the uniqueness and variety of Filipino piety which you wonder if the younger generations will experience. That was why I felt glad that De Leon's 7-year-old Wana took her eyes off the Harry Potter she was reading to watch Ado's Good Friday feat. And that's why I think businessman **Bert Lina**'s idea of turning Laguna's churches and religious traditions into a strong culture tourism come-on, is good.

There should be salvation in the countryside even as C-5 and the rest of Metro Manila continue to be mired in trash, literally.

E-mail the author at tsanjuan @skyinet.net

ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

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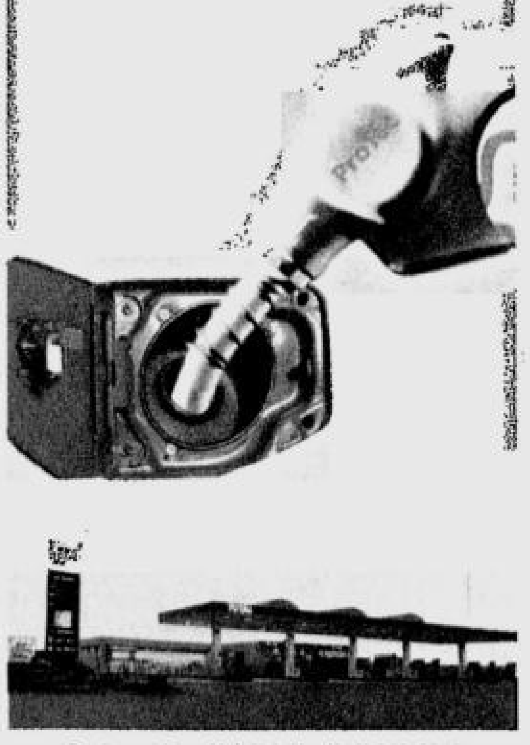

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FUNTASTIC SUMMER

Sports and Hobbies Festival
April 8 - May 13 (Sundays) Pokemon TCG League Season 5 3/L fronting Mc Donald Bridgeway 2 PM - 5 PM
April 27 -28 Planet X 3-Point Shootout 2/L Carousel Court
April 29 (Sunday) Pokemon TCG League Season 5 2/L Carousel Court 10 AM - 5 PM
May 20 - June 24 (Sundays) Pokemon TCG League Season 6 3/L fronting Mc Donald Bridgeway 2 PM - 5 PM

Mom's Weekend Festival
May 4 & 5 Rose Arbour Craft Seminar 2/L Carousel Court (5/4) 1 PM - 4 PM (5/5) 1 PM - 3 PM
May 5 Mom on the Ramp 2/L Carousel Court 4 PM - 5 PM
May 6 Lucky si Mommy Make-Over c/o Lucky Me 2/L Carousel Court 10 AM - 6 PM

Arts & Music Festival
April 26 Festive Episode I - South Border Concert 2/L Carousel Court 8 PM
May 11 Festive Episode II - Freestyle Concert Promenade Parking (fronting Starbucks) 9 PM
*Note: admission is free for all concerts

Easter Festival - April 15
A. Bring Home an Easter Bunny 2/L Carousel Court 10 AM - 7 PM
B. Nestle Ice Cream Easter Variety Show 2/L Carousel Court 3 PM - 5 PM
C. Easter Egg Painting Workshop 3/L Pixie Forest 10 AM - 5 PM

Pistahan @ EXPO - April 20 to May 31
April 21 Grand Opening & Ribbon Cutting 3 PM 4/L EXPO
Drum & Lyre Band of Laguna
Suman Festival of Aurora Province 2 PM
Cultural Presentation & Craft Demo Schedule 4/L EXPO
April 29 Parada ng Gigantes of Rizal
Drum & Bugle Corps of Rizal
May 1 Coco Festival of Laguna
May 5 Dolores Hambujan Festival of Quezon
Sanduguan Festival of Mindoro Oriental
May 6 Sining Kumintang Dance Troupe of Batangas
Flores de Mayo
*Schedule subject to change without prior notice

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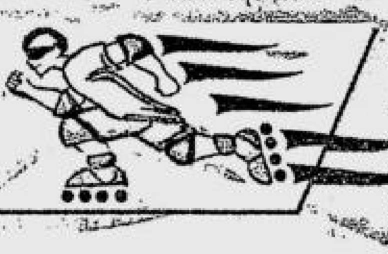

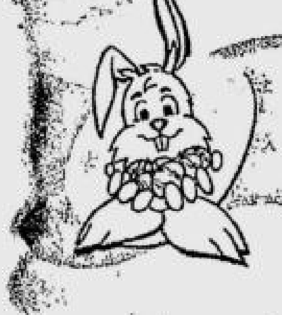

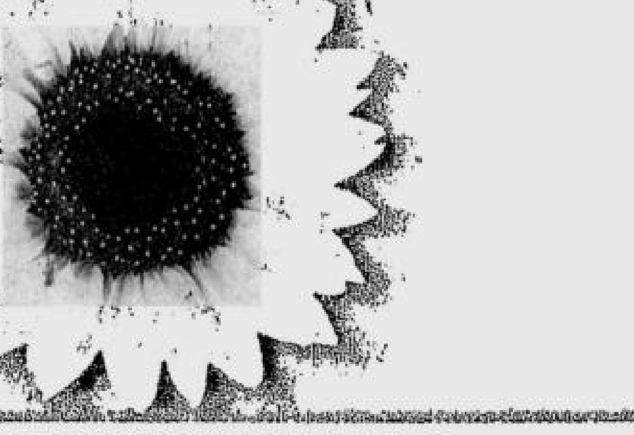

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In the swim of things

YELLOW-BASED underwire top and boy-leg bottom with palm prints

MAKE a big fashion splash this summer with sizzling swimwear from SM.

Heading for the beach has never been so much fun with stylish new ways to get into the swim of things. From tankinis to bikinis, trunks to tank tops, for swimming or sunning, here are some great new ways to be a beach babe or hunk from SM:

Going graphic. Graphic prints are today's big fashion news from the beach and beyond—and they're standing out alongside summer's tropical and floral patterns. Go for black and white graphics for maximum contrast.

Asymmetrical allure. Asymmetrical tops—one-shouldered, diagonally strapped—are giving swimwear a fresh, flattering shape.

Boy-leg bottoms. These not only fit and flatter, but also can be mixed and matched with several tops.

Hardware details. Gold-tone hardware details give a new elegance and glamour to swimwear.

Sarongs. Sultry sarong coordinates are definitely summer eye catchers—gracefully tied at the waist, baring long, long legs.

Denim jackets. Beachwear and streetwear merge as denim jackets are reinvented—this time nonchalantly worn over a swimsuit.

Color and splash. Kids can have fun in the sun with colorful swimsuits with sea creature prints.

The collection is available at the Ladies Wear Department of all SM stores.

GEOMETRIC printed bra-top with blue piping and matching bikini bottom

ASYMMETRICAL strapped floral-printed bikini suit with matching skirt

The ABC of fashion

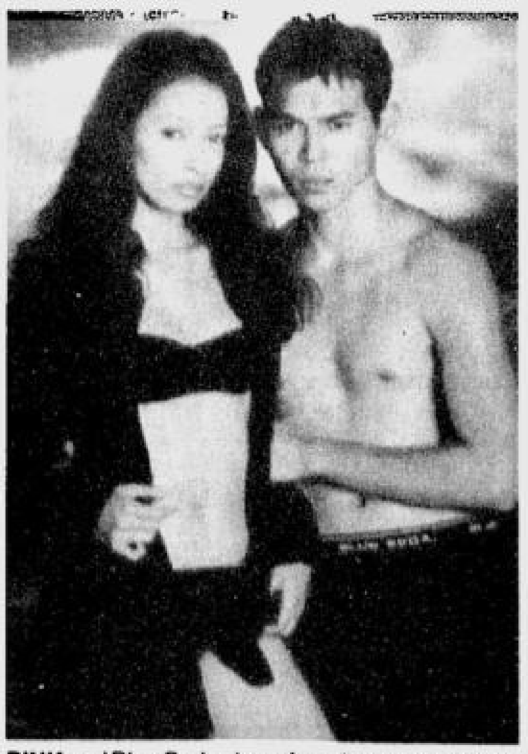
PINK Soda's summer is derived from nature. Keywords for the season are vibration overlaying and lightness. For fabrics, prints is the word. Lots of flowers, from the smallest and palest to the biggest and brightness.

There will still be the classic jeans with a twist—waistband-less and low-waist jeans with enzyme wash.

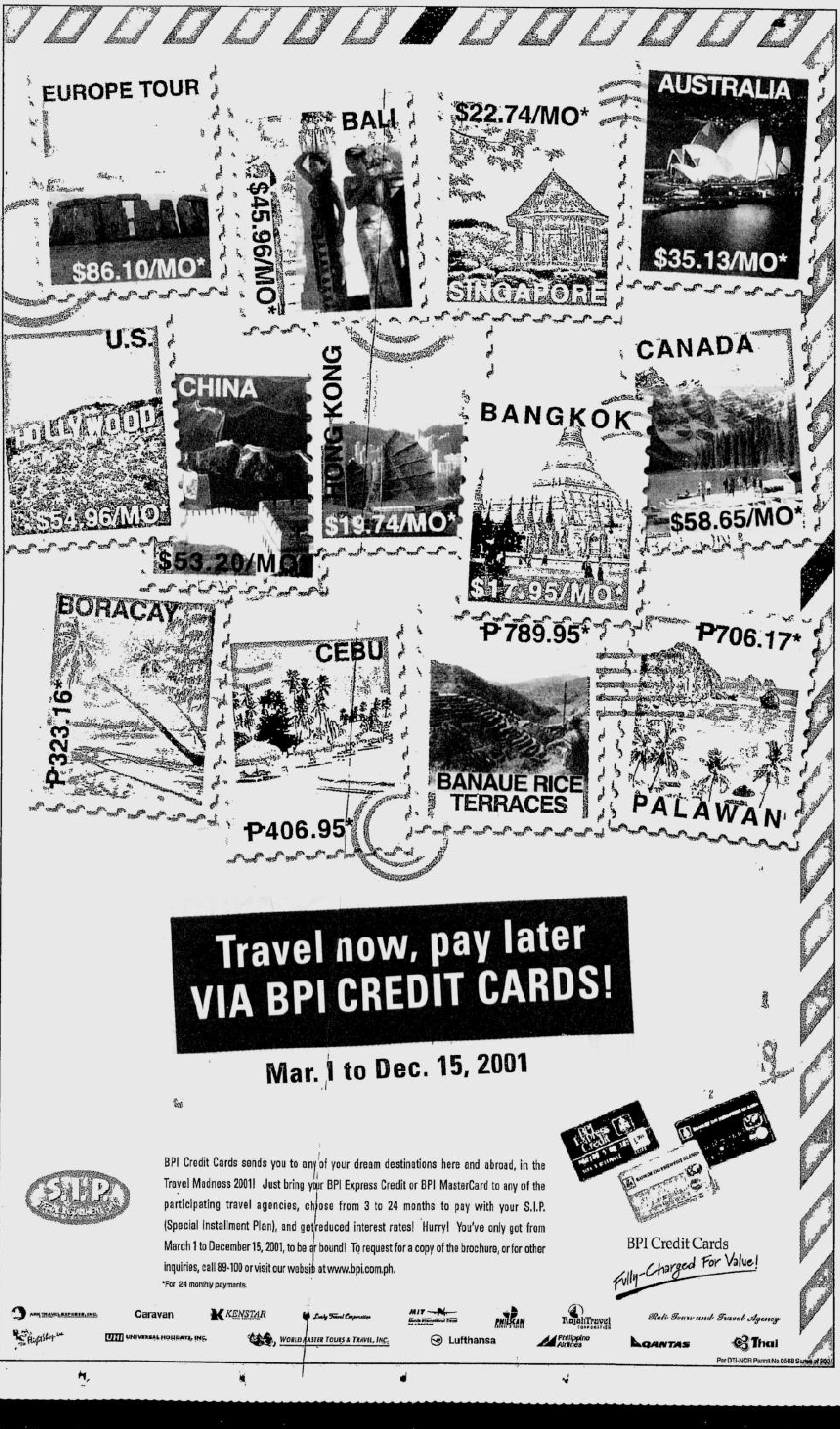
For men, catch the new Anti-Combat by Blue Soda, which is directly linked to men's great desire to find harmony in this overstressed world. They reflect his need to create safe zones and not war, looking for diversions and ways of relaxing that are related to his environment.

The A-Z of Blue Soda:

"A" is anti-combat, the audacity to be unique. "B" is for beige, being so natural. "C" is for checkered, a new basic check. "D" is for denim. "E" is for elegance. "F" is for forecast. "G" is for global good taste. "H" is for hommage a l'homme. "I" is for impeccable. "J" is for jeans reinvented again. "K" is for khaki. "L" is for luxury as ever. "M" is for minimalism, modernity. "N" is for no guns, no bombs, no disease, no dirt, no smoke, no acid rain. "O" is for orange. "P" is for personalization. "Q" is for quiet. "R" is for redefined. "S" is for streetwear. "T" is for touch of class. "U" is for understatement. "V" is for visual. "W" is for wearable. "X" is for extravagance in a measured way. "Y" is for yes to a stronger image. "Z" is for the zeal it takes to achieve more with less.



PINK and Blue Sodas transform from bubble-gum charm to sexy styles,



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Per DTI-NCR Permit No 0568 Series of 2001

Italian designer visits Manila

THE ITALIAN clothing, Pietrogrande, is the latest addition to Linea Italia's brands.

Owned and designed by Marco Pietrogrande, the company is based in Cardano Al Campo in Italy. It traces its roots to a family-run business in 1949. In 1968, the firm was divided in two, and 10 years after, in 1979, Marco joined the other half of the company. Since then, it has flourished into what is today's one of Italy's fastest growing fashion houses.

To date, the Pietrogrande label is carried by 340 shops in Europe, the United States and Asia. In Italy, the fashion house operates 20 shops. Pietrogrande entered the Philippines four years ago through a distribution agreement with Linea Italia Group. Next year, Marco will design and manufacture a men's line, which will be exclusively available in the Philippines through Linea Italia.

Pietrogrande was recently in town to get a feel of Filipino dressing. He's been to Manila and Cebu visiting Linea Italia shops as well as observing the market

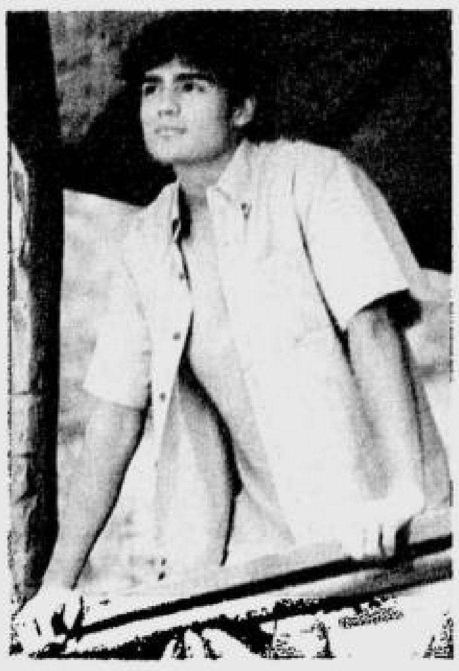
He observed that fashion today is bringing "beauty" and "decorativeness" back in the dress after a long season of following the concept of minimalism. Dresses now reflect more luxury and are decorative rather than plain.

Whether working alone or with a group of designers, Marco never fails to incorporate his fashion discipline. "In every piece of clothing, it should be kept nice and easy. Never too much, just the right accent, is needed."

As to his own personal fashion preferences, Marco said he is more inclined to go "natural." In materials, he opts for natural fibers like linen, cotton and silk. The Pietrogrande collection is available at Linea Italia 6750, Prima Linea (Greenbelt, SM Megamall and Cebu), Linea Italia (Alabang Town Center, SM Manila), Viva (SM Megamall and Cebu) and Corso Marconi (Festival Supermall Alabang and Cebu).

PIETROGRANDE

HIS clothes are easy and unfussy.


YELLOW minor gingham polo over a solid tee, matched with a natural-colored linen drawstring shorts from British India

It's a guy thing

AS summer comes to its peak, here are some top choices for men to wear during a walk on the beach or when lying down in the couch.

Sleeveless shirts—No. 1 if you are feeling hot and sweaty. This can also make you feel comfy and perfectly in fashion this season. Check out San Francisco.

Checkered polos—Button-down polos in checks can show your casualness especially when matched with khaki pants and shorts. You can carry it from day activities until night gimmicks. Top brands are British India, Pierre Cardin, Japs and San Francisco.

Polo shirt—Cotton polos with collar are airy and stylish, too. If you are the type who settles for something relaxing and comfy, this is the one for you. Choose from Japs, British India, Pierre Cardin and San Francisco.

Fitted shirts—There are a variety of this kind but Pierre Cardin has the best set of fitted shirts/polo type with collar. You can wear this to work and then straight to an after-office date.

Complete your summer look with baseball caps, khaki shorts, denims and two pants. Go check out San Francisco, Japs, Pierre Cardin, Men's Manhattan and British India.

Join Cinderella's ongoing promo, "Head for the C." Get a chance to win a free trip to Bali, Indonesia and Montemar Beach Resort with a minimum purchase of P300. The promo is also sponsored by Punta Baluarte, LA Gear, Rockport/Reebok, Keds and Body & Soul. Promo ends May 15.

POLO shirt with collar and stripes, paired with khaki pants from Pierre Cardin

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CLASSIC dress shoes are a favorite of executives.

The Chelsea boot, popularized by the Beatles, is back in fashion. Believe it or not, in the shoe scene, ankle boots sell at the height of summer

LESS formal design combine conservative and cutting-edge fashion.

For the guys and Nunn other

BY MARGE C. ENRIQUEZ

NUNN Bush, the American men's footwear brand, finally reaches Asia. The Philippines holds the distinction of being the only place in this part of the world that carries its freestanding stores.

Filipinos have a penchant for foreign brands. One of the reasons is that, since many local shoe brands import their materials, why not get shoes made abroad that have passed stringent standards of quality?

In Metro Manila, the men's footwear market isn't as competitive as the ladies'—not yet. Nick Tuason, general manager of Pacsport, the company that holds the exclusive distributorship, says Nunn Bush is filling a niche in quality shoes for half the price of the name brands. Designer brands fetch P12,000 to P20,000. Some of the popular foreign labels start at P9,000 a pair.

Nunn Bush caters to young, upwardly mobile gentlemen who want European- made shoes that are affordable. The prices in Nunn Bush's top-of-the-line Brass Boot collection range from P5,800-6,350. For handcrafted shoes, the prices are reasonable. These shoes are made in Italy and Spain, countries known for their long history in leather manufacturing and shoemaking. In the United States, Nunn Bush's Brass Boot line costs $120-130. Tuason says that with the fluctuating dollar exchange rate, consumers can get a better deal shopping Nunn Bush shoes in Manila than in the country of origin.

The Brass Boot line is a fusion of European craftsmanship and contemporary design. It starts with high-quality leather such as calf skin, hand-finished leather uppers, full leather linings for a better fit, leather sock liners for the wearer's comfort, leather and rubber outsoles for breathability. Some are accessorized with nickel plates or buckles.

If women's shoes are going pointed, most men's styles have square toes. Since it's summer, many styles are moccasins or slip-ons. For the corporate guy, there's a lot of classic dress shoes in cap-toes, lace-ups and buckled styles. For the preppie, there's the classic tassled loafer, handsewn in Spain. The Chelsea boot, popularized by the Beatles, is back in fashion. Believe it or not, in the shoe scene, ankle boots sell at the height of summer.

Surpassing expectations

Nunn Bush's Nxxt and the sporty Sao lines are all under P3,000. In the US, they cost about $75. Some have traction outsoles for roughing it out.

The good thing about the store is that there are stocks for tall guys with big feet. Most of the styles run up to size 12.

Last year, Nunn Bush posted $125 million in sales. In Manila, Nunn Bush opened its stores only last January at the height of the impeachment trials. Sales in the three outlets—Robinsons Place Ermita, Rockwell Power Plant and Alabang Town center—surpassed expectations. The industry standard sets 20 percent of its inventory to be selling within a certain span of time. Nunn Bush's inventory has been selling at the rate of 27 percent.

NUNN Bush SAO lets you step into the great outdoors.

In Robinsons Place, the fast-selling lines are the Nxxt and Sao, which are affordable to the middle-class market. In Rockwell Power Plant, young executives favor the Brass Boot dress shoes.

Nunn Bush also has a corner at SM Megamall's department store. Tuason says that with the P2,800 price tag, the sales have been "very positive." It's almost as if Nunn Bush had a concept store. SM's sales already constitute 25 percent of the business.

He observes there are two types of male customers: The conservative and the well-read guy who knows what's the latest in fashion. The big sellers are the styles they've seen in the advertisements of Gentleman's Quarterly.

With new styles coming in, Tuason expects the sales to double by year's end. Now that's a big step forward.

Reach for the sky to cool off

BY CAMILLE T. CRUZ
PHOTO BY CHITO VECINA
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

ALL the colors that captured my sight over the Easter weekend seem to have remained with me, at least in my mind. It was a fruitful weekend, with lots of colors and solemnity.

There was much of nature to admire from a vantage point on a volcano, lots of fish on the table and a few churches to visit. The weekend was holy, restful and long—the kind of vacation that only comes once a year.

The sky was daubed in new shades of blues and whites. They were blues so clear and cheery they left no room to feel down. With the temperature at more than 98°F and still rising, you helped yourself stay cool by wearing the right colors.

Think of the ocean, sky and fluffy white clouds. In combination, even the sight of you wearing these colors can bring some degree of coolness to others. Those of you who are just on your way to a beach, these colors will give you a very chic and fresh look. Against the sand, the sight of aqua top and white bottom or a monochromatic blue is like looking straight into the colors of light and water.

Try it.

An aqua shirtdress is one item that suits most people comfortably.

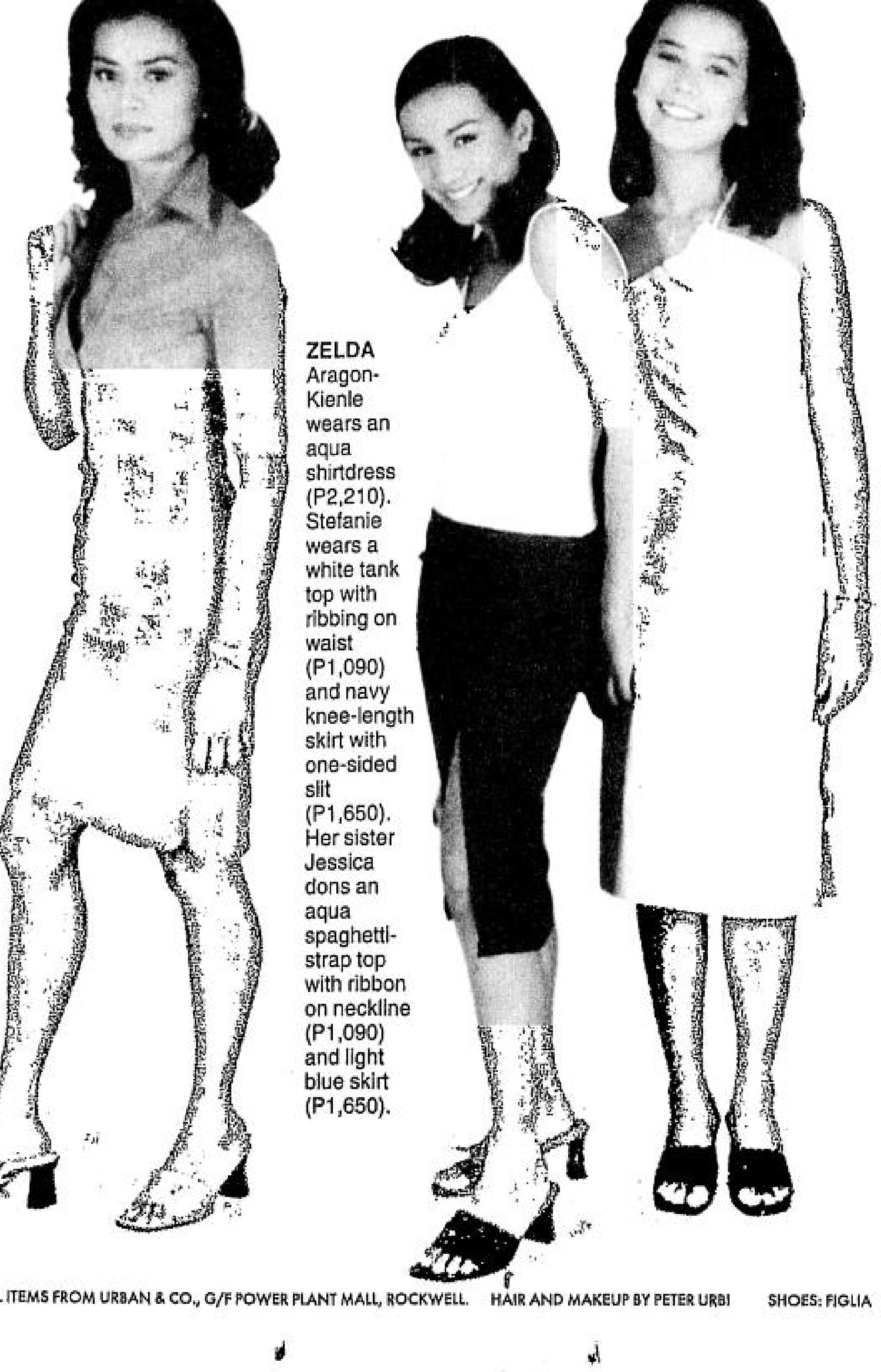
It's casual, simple, convenient and ready to go—the perfect dress to pour into one small duffel bag for a weekend trip.

White and blue combinations are great. They uplift your soul as well as your style. If paired nicely, your clothes exude a freshness that can last all day.

Once in a while, it is all right to go monochromatic blue. An aqua tank top paired with a light blue skirt is quite nice. Try a light knit tank with minimal detail. If you choose to stay with white, a nice white tank and a not-so-light blue skirt works well, too. Pick out pieces that show individuality, something that has personality even when it is just lying on a tabletop.

There are other colors to pick when this kind of heat is on. The hues, like your point of destiny, should bring you closer to the kind of spirit that is out there. Just think of the colors of nature that will surround you.

E-mail the author at camille_cruz@hotmail.com



ZELDA Aragon-Kienle wears an aqua shirtdress (P2,210). Stefanie wears a white tank top with ribbing on waist (P1,090) and navy knee-length skirt with one-sided slit (P1,650). Her sister Jessica dons an aqua spaghetti-strap top with ribbon on neckline (P1,090) and light blue skirt (P1,650).

ALL ITEMS FROM URBAN & CO., G/F POWER PLANT MALL, ROCKWELL. HAIR AND MAKEUP BY PETER URBI SHOES: FIGLIA

Must-haves that go well with your footwear

CHUNKY embroidered denim slippers

WHEN was the last time you own a pair of nice neon sandals? Or a stylish tote summer bag for your summer rendezvous? Rusty Lopez and Centropell help you find the right summer must-haves that go well with your summer footwear:

Pinking sheers—easy pink lip gloss that is sheer, shining or sparkles that comes in a range of shades from barely there to juicy colors.

Handy swipes—after pumping gas or licking a dripping ice cream cone, check out those handy baby wipes mild enough to take care of mascara smudges.

Hair control—if you run low on holding power, you can buy freshly scented gels to solve bad hair days.

Paint job—next time your eye shadow creases, fades or rubs off during hot summer days, try these stay-put color paint in tube form that won't fade away.

Bare flat sandals—add zest to your summer by checking out Centropell's flat sandals in beige, white and stone.

Go rubber—for easy beach walk on the sand, try Rusty Lopez's stylish rubber slippers in pink, lavender and green with minimal embroidery.

Slip into something stylish

THE CELINE lady is simple, smart, feminine, happy, warm and wholesome. Celine is locally handcrafted with its strictest quality standards and yet retains its feminine appeal when it comes to designs and styles.

For this summer season, Celine offers a variety of sleek slip-on, open-toe sandals, slides and flatties for that flattering feet.

In fashionable leather and lightweight rubber soles, slip into Celine shoes—so stylish, cool and comfortable at very affordable price tags starting from P800-1,000.

Celine is located at all SM branches, Ayala malls, Robinsons malls, Shangri-La Plaza mall and the new SM Pampanga.

MOCK crocodile skin slides

He is hurt by unreciprocated feelings for a cousin

DEAR Tita Dulce,

I'm 35, still single. As an elementary school teacher, I'm able to offset my loneliness with the happy time I spend with my students who admire my creative teaching.

However, I'm facing now the summer months. For the past three weeks I have been in a state of depression due to a falling out with my first cousin... a cousin whom I had a vague memory of as a little thin girl before. She was already a tall, beautiful college student when I met her again five years ago during the wake for our grandmother.

After that we started calling each other, going out together, with the age difference of 11 years. Both of us were proud when we were mistaken as sweethearts by friends, by passers-by and, in particular, by taxi drivers. During those five years, she had two serious boyfriends and many suitors whom I never met.

My cousin and I were both there for each other, to talk about personal problems, and we even went out together during the times she had a boyfriend. We had limited times together, but the times we spent with each other brought us closer. Also, the compliments we gave each other greatly improved the self-esteem our respective families failed to nurture in us.

Our falling out started some weeks ago after I asked her to go out with me in return for her asking me out earlier. She was worried that I would spend three hours in heavy traffic just to see her for a few minutes. She believes I'm in for a relationship beyond a cousin-to-cousin one. I must admit my getting fonder of her and afraid I'm losing her as she is ready for marriage, though not to her current boyfriend. She says I'm now very depressed. I'm hurt. She knows that I cannot live without her, but she has stopped caring for me like the way she used to. Please advise me on what to do.

ERMIE HARRIS

Take a deep breath, *hijo*, and relax. Expressing your feelings and disappointments while writing your letter may have really magnified your thoughts, but then, as you know, time heals all wounds. You should even be glad that your relationship went cold, for two reasons.

The first will be better explained by a lawyer. Our Family Code does not allow first cousins to tie the knot.

The second reason will also be better clarified by an OB-Gyne. Babies of parents with close blood relation may not grow up healthy. There is no need to go into detail about this here but you can ask a doctor friend for an explanation.

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Tita Dulce

Look around you. Our population has more females than males. One lesson you learned from your association with your cousin is that friendship can warm up feelings. When you meet a girl, don't expect it to be love at first sight.

One last advice—let your cousin go. There's more to life than just looking back. Look ahead, instead.

And don't feel sorry you revealed your thoughts. You may not realize it, but there are many who are in the same boat as you. I hope they read this and talk to their lawyer and doctor friends.

Looking for buyer of old coins

YOUR column is one of my favorites. I admire the way you dispense sound advice.

I hope you can help me on a minor thing—not a problem. Can you give me the address of the buyer of old coins? Thanks a lot and more power.

ANNIE OF DAVAO CITY

Yours is the fourth query I have received, and from the farthest. You can call up Mr. Albino Quiban Jr. at his office, 524-0548. He is the president of Bank Notes Society of the Philippines. His address is 1184-F A. Mabini, Ermita, Manila.

* * *

Dear Robert,

Here is the correct e-mail address of Courage: courage_ph@edsamail.com.ph. Sorry it was misprinted last time.

E-mail titadulce@netscape.net or send letters to P.O. Box 2353, Makati CPO 1263 Makati City, or PDI, Chino Roces Avenue corner Yague and Mascardo Streets, Makati City

SM Star Club search launched

SM Supermalls launched its Star Club search for talented kids aged 4-7. The grand finals will take place on May 26.

Prizes await winners—P25,000, grand prize, P15,000, first runners-up, and P5,000, finalists.

For the past years, the SM Star Club search has been the start of bigger things for its winners.

Just take it from last year's winners, Christine Joanne Feraren and Paolo Luis Ocampo, who showed us their star quality in a fashion shoot held at Storyland at SM City Fairview. Since he won the grand prize, Paolo has made TV commercials for a leading fabric softener, a shampoo and a toothpaste brand. He has also wrapped up another batch of three TV commercials.

Christine Joanne, or CJ, meanwhile, got a big boost when her classmates and teachers at the Our Lady of Perpetual Help School began collecting SM Star Club news clippings that featured her and posted these at the school's bulletin board. CJ, who's now 7, not only has done some modeling, but has become active in the performing arts.

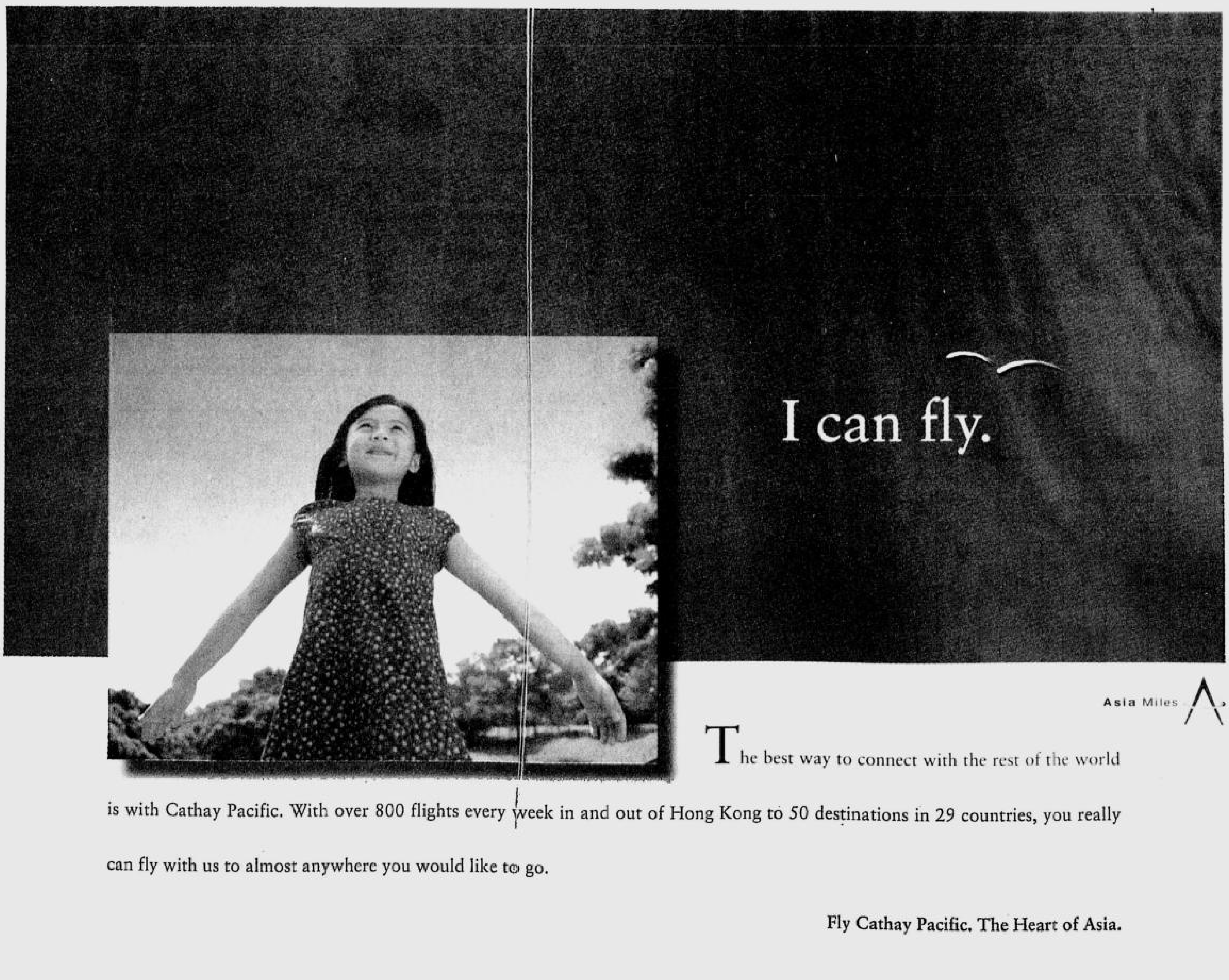
The shooting of rare animals will remain unknown.

Unless we shoot back.

WWF

The Inquirer joins the World Wildlife Fund in the fight to save rare animals. From now on you'll be reading more and learning more about the plight of endangered species. In our crusade to save the world, the only weapon we have is your support.

INQUIRER



Asia Miles

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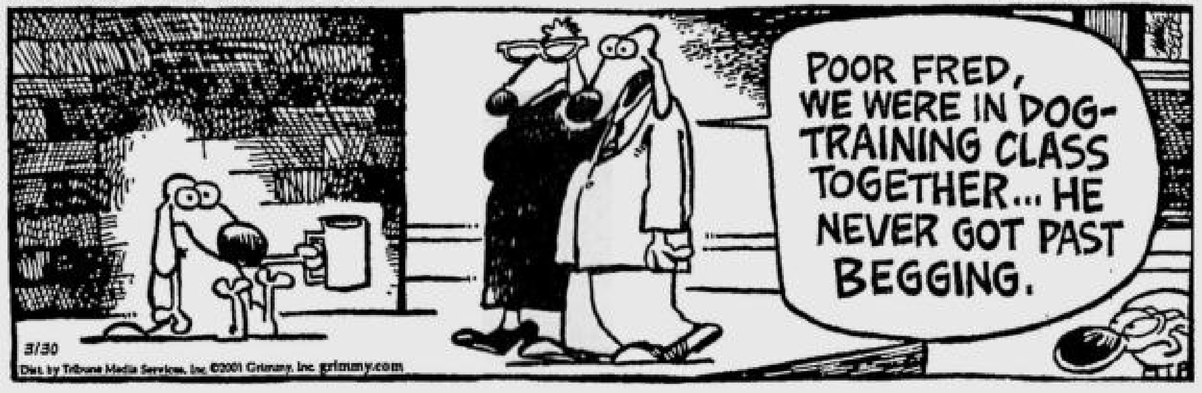
COMIC Relief

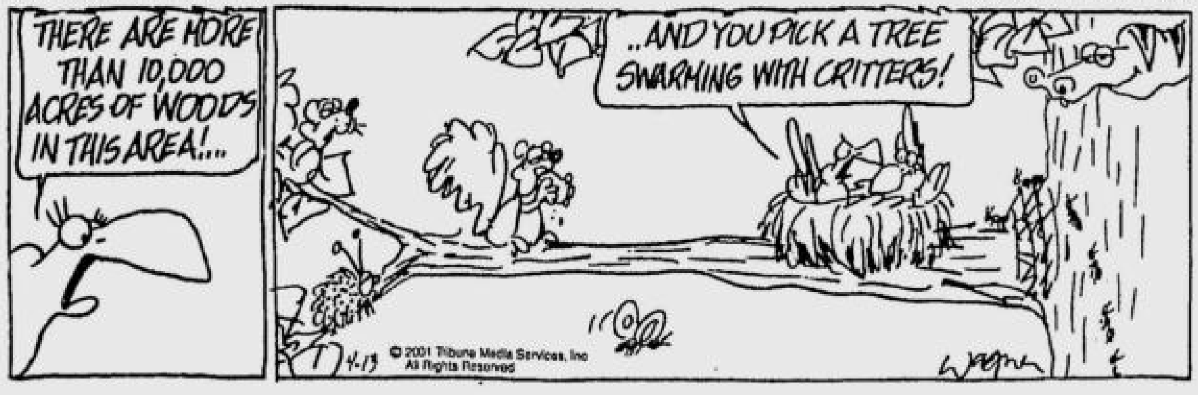
MOTHER GOOSE & GRIMM

BY MIKE PETERS


POOR FRED, WE WERE IN DOG-TRAINING CLASS TOGETHER... HE NEVER GOT PAST BEGGING.
3/30
Dist. by Tribune Media Services, Inc ©2001 Grimmy, Inc. grimmy.com

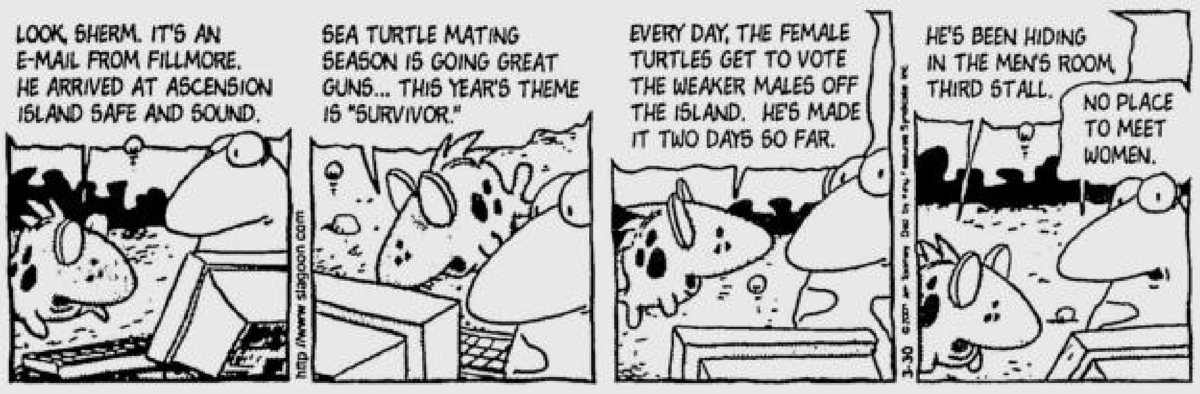
ANIMAL CRACKER

BY FRED WAGNER


THERE ARE MORE THAN 10,000 ACRES OF WOODS IN THIS AREA!...
..AND YOU PICK A TREE SWARMING WITH CRITTERS!
4-13
© 2001 Tribune Media Services, Inc All Rights Reserved
Wagner

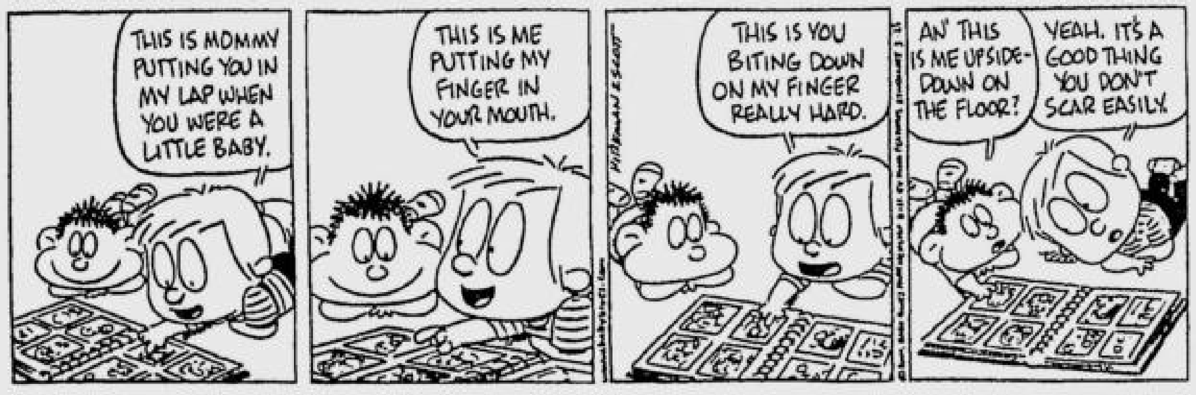
SHERMAN'S LAGOON

BY JIM TOOMEY


LOOK, SHERM. IT'S AN E-MAIL FROM FILLMORE. HE ARRIVED AT ASCENSION ISLAND SAFE AND SOUND.
SEA TURTLE MATING SEASON IS GOING GREAT GUNS... THIS YEAR'S THEME IS "SURVIVOR."
EVERY DAY, THE FEMALE TURTLES GET TO VOTE THE WEAKER MALES OFF THE ISLAND. HE'S MADE IT TWO DAYS SO FAR.
HE'S BEEN HIDING IN THE MEN'S ROOM, THIRD STALL.
NO PLACE TO MEET WOMEN.
http://www.slagoon.com
3-30

BABY BLUES

BY JERRY SCOTT


THIS IS MOMMY PUTTING YOU IN MY LAP WHEN YOU WERE A LITTLE BABY.
THIS IS ME PUTTING MY FINGER IN YOUR MOUTH.
THIS IS YOU BITING DOWN ON MY FINGER REALLY HARD.
AN' THIS IS ME UPSIDE-DOWN ON THE FLOOR?
YEAH. IT'S A GOOD THING YOU DON'T SCAR EASILY.
KIRKMAN & SCOTT

HOROSCOPE

BY EUGENIA LAST

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lionel Hampton, Jessica Lange, Ryan O'Neal, Toller Cranston, Mauricio Gugelmin, Luther Vandross, Carmen Electra, Joey Lawrence

Happy Birthday: Put your good memory to work for you. Draw on your past experience, and you will spiral in a positive, promising direction. The more straightforward you are, the more allies you will win. The work you do with others will bring you recognition, lasting friendships and the highest rewards. Your numbers: 18, 23, 27, 34, 38, 42

ARIES (March 21-April 19): You'll feel anxious if someone you trusted has not been completely honest with you. Channel your energy into hobbies and personal interests. It's time to do things that make you happy.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): A secret love affair will play havoc with your heart. Think before you jump into a situation that is emotionally devastating. Save your heart and put your energy into self-improvement.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't let your peers talk you into spending more than you planned. Catch up on correspondence that is long overdue. Make sure that the groups you join have the same beliefs.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): You aren't seeing your position clearly. Step back and reassess your motives and your direction. It's time to consider your future plans and exactly who and what fits into them.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): You can sell your ideas to those who can supply the financial backing that you need. Small-business projects will turn into a worthwhile venture as long as you don't try to expand too quickly.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Make changes to your environment. You need to focus on what will bring you the satisfaction you require. Rid yourself of bad habits and nonproductive people.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Choose your activities carefully. If you take part in intellectual games, you will meet individuals who can entice you. You're in the mood for love, so set the stage and be prepared to play.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Make plans to do things with children or to be involved in outdoor activities. Travel will be in your best interests, but be careful not to overspend.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Someone you live with will be impossible to get along with. Don't try to deal with important issues or make changes that will upset your household. Make plans to go out with friends.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Changes in your home will be hectic but beneficial. Don't count on much help from those you live with. Too much stress will result in disagreements. Do the work yourself.

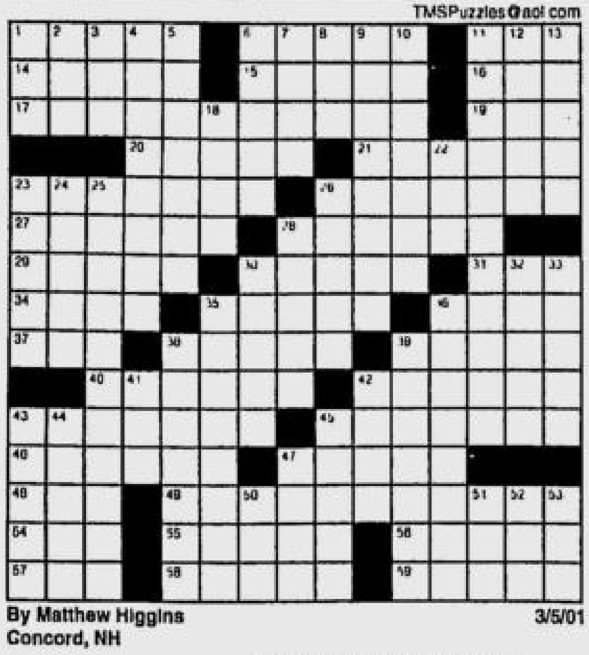
AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Group activities will lead to romantic opportunities. Don't let relatives know your intentions. They are not likely to agree with your plans and may even cause delays or setbacks.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Visit friends or relatives who have been confined. You need time to think about your future direction and to make both professional and personal changes. Don't be afraid to make moves.

Birthday Baby: You'll be on the go and forever searching for love, adventure and financial independence. You have strong willpower and drive, which will ensure your success. You are daring, outgoing and entertaining.

DAILY CROSSWORD

TMSPuzzles@aol.com



By Matthew Higgins
Concord, NH

3/5/01

ACROSS
1 Smith and West
6 Phi Beta __
11 Pat
14 Extreme enthusiasm
15 Broadcasted
16 Ripen
17 "The Sea, the Sea" author
19 Levin or Gershwin
20 With 22D, Sally Field film
21 More succinct
23 Czech Republic region
26 Ventured outside one's usual area
27 Smells
28 __ Abdul-Jabbar
29 Stairway part
30 Gerulaitis of tennis
31 U.S. transp. reg. agcy.
34 Requirement
35 Handrail post
36 Muse of history
37 Wapiti
38 Inflexible
39 Ointment
40 Verdugo and Firsova
42 Blended food into a paste
43 Appetizers
45 Sahara and Gobi
46 Snagged
47 "__ Bulba"
48 "__ You Being Served?"
49 Yvonne de Carlo role
54 Craze
55 Saw wood?
56 Full of gossip
57 Travel by plane
58 Senator Kefauver
59 Got up

DOWN
1 Pierre's friend
2 Patriotic women's grp.
3 Tropical black bird
4 Designated incorrectly
5 Urn with a tap
6 Destiny
7 Verdi opera
8 In favor of
9 Of the chest
10 Sticks
11 Henry James title character
12 Concur
13 Stubble
18 "Mila 18" author
22 See 20A
23 Seine tributary
24 Bay window
25 Former Hyannis Port matriarch
26 Destined
28 New Zealanders, to Aussies
30 "Viva Las __"
32 Musky cat
33 Female students, once
35 Bowling game
36 Tender toucher
38 Drive back
39 Woman saved by Daniel
41 Trail behind
42 Lima's land
43 Thresher's waste
44 Of hearing
45 Titled ladies
47 Capital of Phoenicia
50 Grouped merchandise
51 A pair
52 Double curve
53 Deli bread

PREVIOUS PUZZLE ANSWER

S	A	F	F	R	O	N	S	■	S	H	A	P	E	D
A	B	I	L	E	N	E	S	■	N	A	P	O	L	I
P	E	R	U	S	E	R	S	■	A	R	T	I	E	S
■	■	E	I	E	I	O	■	S	K	I	■	S	C	H
R	I	D	D	E	R	■	S	T	Y	■	D	O	T	E
E	N	E	■	D	O	D	I	E	■	I	O	N	I	A
A	S	P	S	■	N	I	L	E	■	S	O	P	O	R
P	O	A	C	H	■	V	I	P	■	T	R	E	N	T
P	U	R	R	S	■	I	C	E	S	■	S	N	E	E
O	C	T	E	T	■	D	O	R	I	S	■	L	E	N
R	I	M	E	■	H	E	N	■	D	U	P	E	R	S
T	A	E	■	E	O	S	■	P	E	R	O	T	■	■
I	N	N	E	S	S	■	A	L	C	E	S	T	I	S
O	C	T	A	N	E	■	R	E	A	S	S	E	S	S
N	E	S	T	E	D	■	P	A	R	T	E	R	R	E

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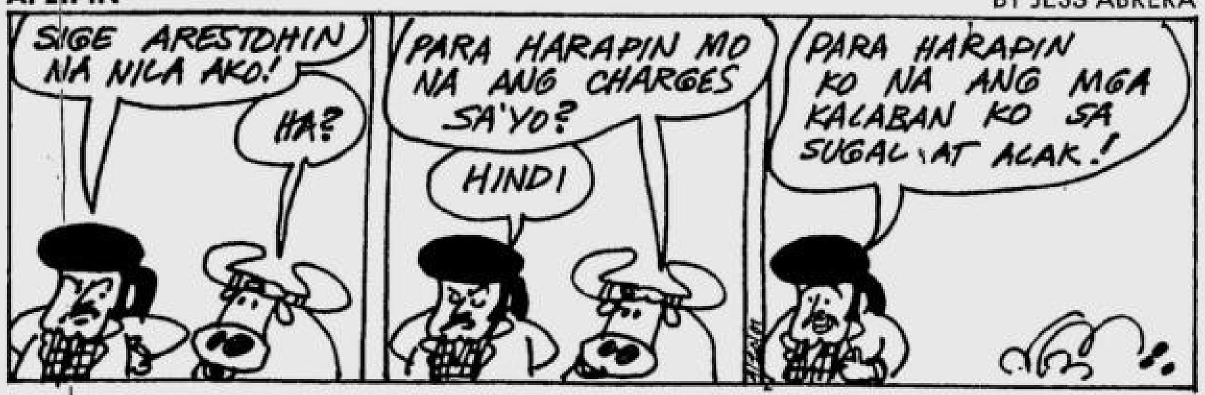
3/5/01

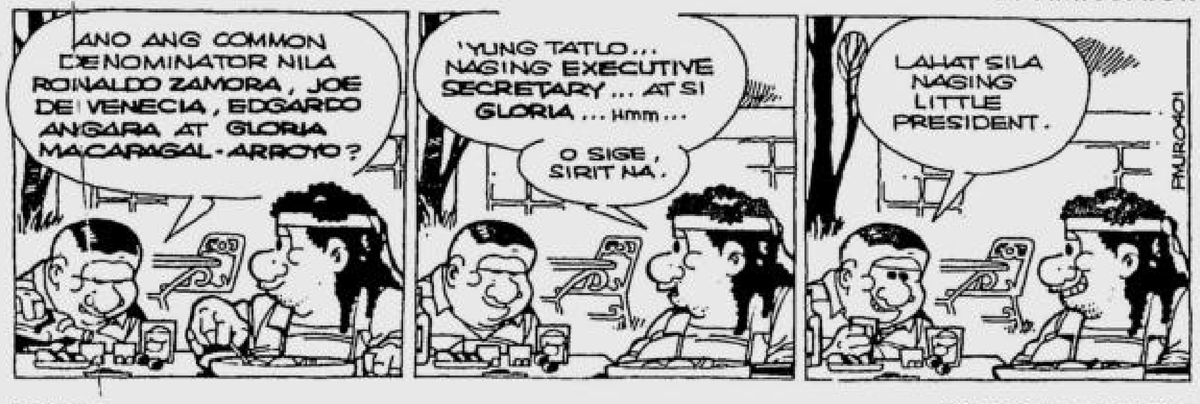
A. LIPIN

BY JESS ABRERA


SIGE ARESTOHIN NA NILA AKO!
HA?
PARA HARAPIN MO NA ANG CHARGES SA'YO?
HINDI
PARA HARAPIN KO NA ANG MGA KALABAN KO SA SUGAL AT ALAK!

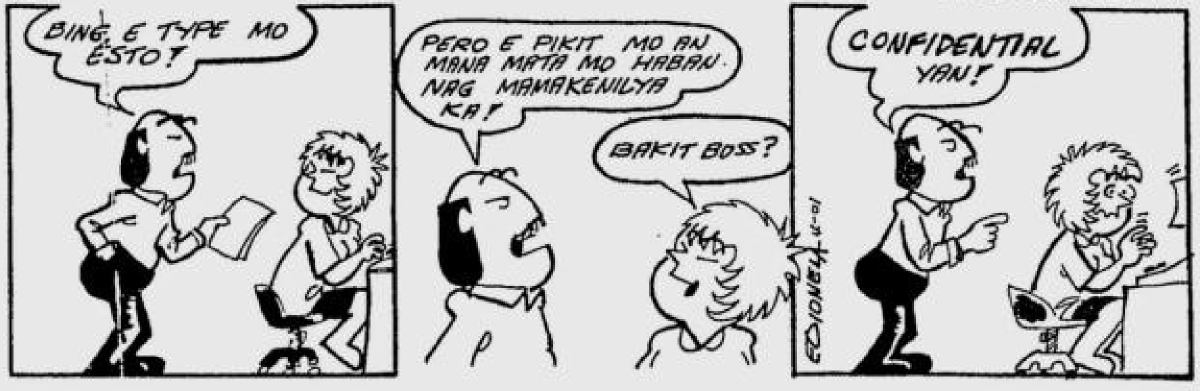
PUGAD BABOY

BY P.M. JUNIOR


ANO ANG COMMON DENOMINATOR NILA RONALDO ZAMORA, JOE DE VENECIA, EDGARDO ANGARA AT GLORIA MACARAGAL-ARROYO?
'YUNG TATLO... NAGING EXECUTIVE SECRETARY... AT SI GLORIA... HMM...
O SIGE, SIRIT NA.
LAHAT SILA NAGING LITTLE PRESIDENT.

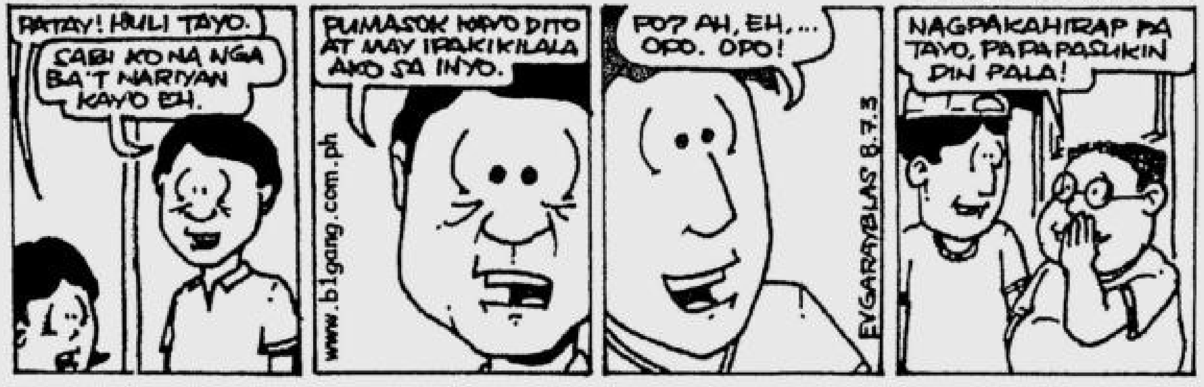
SIMO

BY EDGAR DIONELA


BING, E TYPE MO ESTO?
PERO E PIKIT MO AN MANA MATA MO HABAN NAG MAMAKENILYA KA!
BAKIT BOSS?
CONFIDENTIAL YAN!
EDIONELA

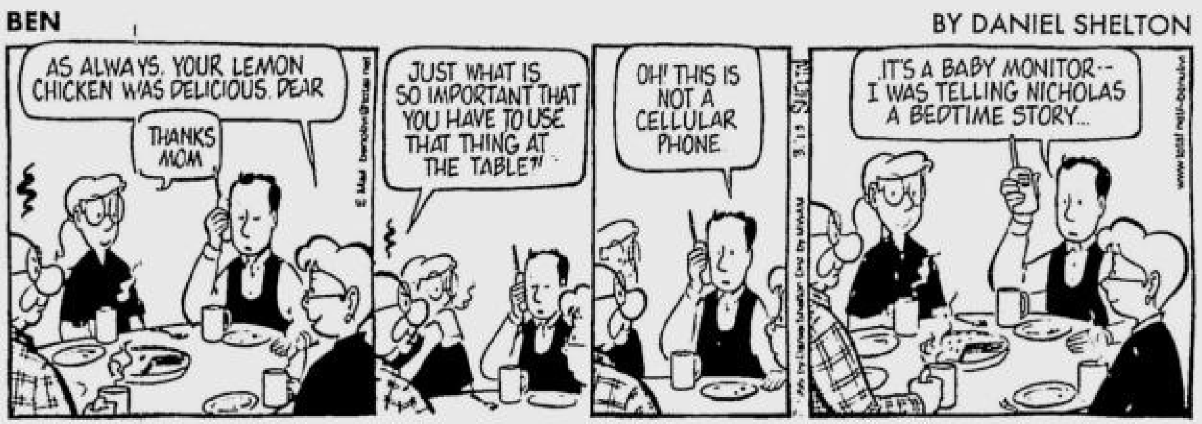
B1 GANG

BY ATS11/ JEA/ FEVG


PATAY! HULI TAYO.
SABI KO NA NGA BA'T NARIYAN KAYO EH.
PUMASOK KAYO DITO AT MAY IPAKIKILALA AKO SA INYO.
PO? AH, EH,... OPO. OPO!
NAGPAKAHIRAP PA TAYO, PAPAPASUKIN DIN PALA!
www.b1gang.com.ph
EVGARAYBLAS 8.7.3

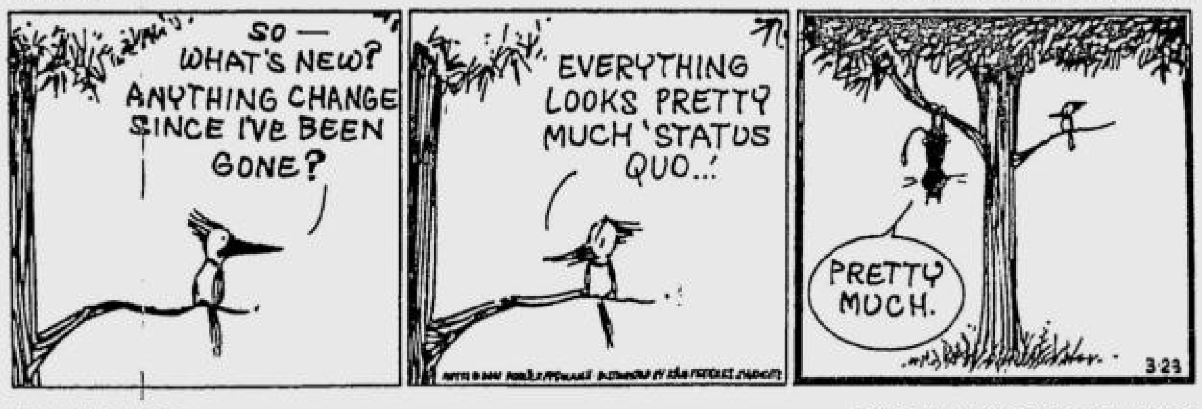
BEN

BY DANIEL SHELTON


AS ALWAYS, YOUR LEMON CHICKEN WAS DELICIOUS, DEAR
THANKS MOM
JUST WHAT IS SO IMPORTANT THAT YOU HAVE TO USE THAT THING AT THE TABLE?
OH! THIS IS NOT A CELLULAR PHONE
IT'S A BABY MONITOR-- I WAS TELLING NICHOLAS A BEDTIME STORY...

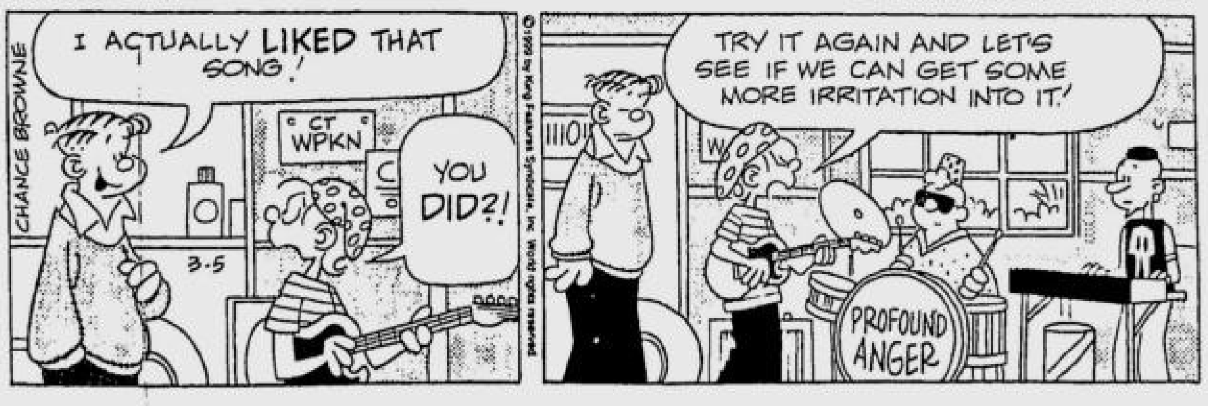
MUTTS

BY PATRICK McDONNELL


SO — WHAT'S NEW? ANYTHING CHANGE SINCE I'VE BEEN GONE?
EVERYTHING LOOKS PRETTY MUCH 'STATUS QUO..'
PRETTY MUCH.
3-23

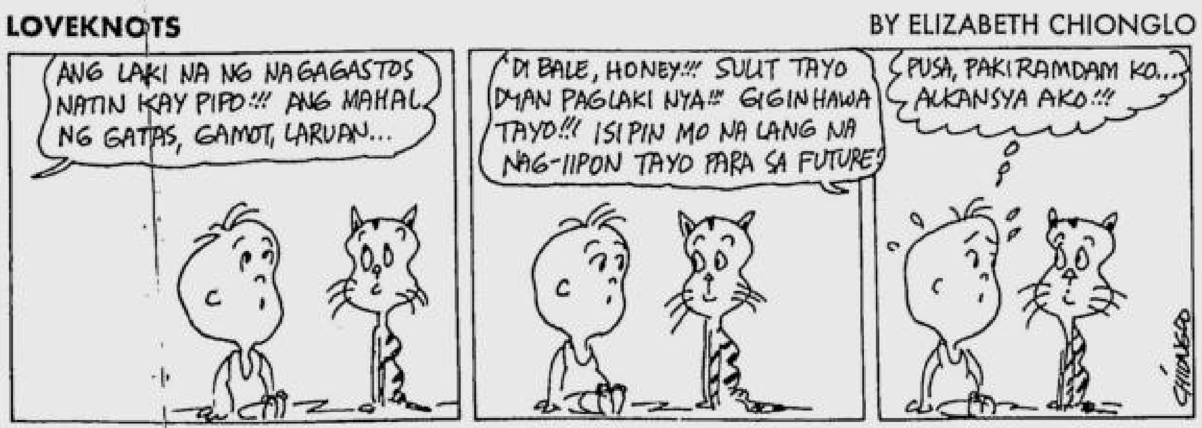
HI AND LOIS

BY BRIAN & GREG WALKER


CHANCE BROWNE
I ACTUALLY LIKED THAT SONG!
CT WPKN
YOU DID?!
3-5
TRY IT AGAIN AND LET'S SEE IF WE CAN GET SOME MORE IRRITATION INTO IT!
PROFOUND ANGER

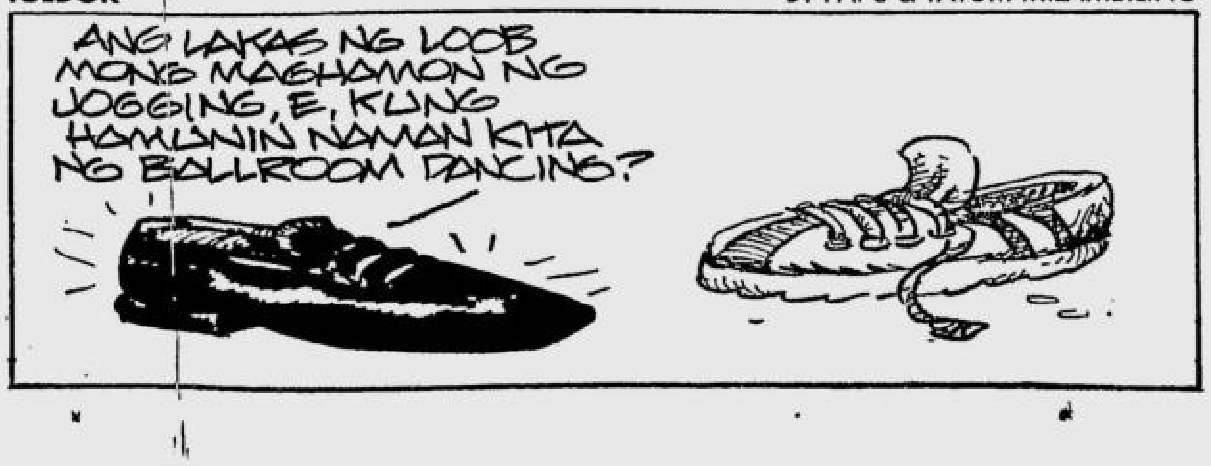
LOVEKNOTS

BY ELIZABETH CHIONGLO


ANG LAKI NA NG NAGAGASTOS NATIN KAY PIPO!!! ANG MAHAL NG GATAS, GAMOT, LARUAN...
DI BALE, HONEY!!! SULIT TAYO DYAN PAGLAKI NYA!!! GIGINHAWA TAYO!!! ISIPIN MO NA LANG NA NAG-IIPON TAYO PARA SA FUTURE!
PUSA, PAKIRAMDAM KO... ALKANSYA AKO!!!
CHIONGLO

TULDOK

BY PAPU & TATUM MILAMBILING


ANG LAKAS NG LOOB MONG MAGHAMON NG JOGGING, E, KUNG HAMUNIN NAMAN KITA NG BALLROOM DANCING?

A beehive of holiday-seekers

By Donnie C. Ramirez

WHILE the usually bustling Ayala Center in Makati was practically a ghost town on Holy Week, Hong Kong was a beehive of Pinoy holiday seekers, finding succor from Manila's debilitating 30-plus degree heat. Hong Kong weather was simply marvelous with the temperature in the mid-20s. Pashminas, mothballed by fashionistas several seasons back, were suddenly in bloom again in various shades and hues of pastel.

At the Hong Kong Hotel, flagship of the Marco Polo Hotel Group, the lobby was teeming with familiar faces from Manila's social set. Duty Free Phils.' **Pong Salud** and wife **Chit** brought their whole family, including newlywed son **Dennis** and his beautiful bride **Liza (nee Berroya)**. Also billeted in the same hotel was Trade Secretary **Mar Roxas**.

At the Chi-chi Ocean Center, antique collector **Ernie Liwanag** was seen browsing through priceless Orientalia relics in one of the high-end antique stores. He ended up with a magnificent accordion-type bamboo wall décor with intricate hand-carved patterns. Ernie stayed at the Marco Polo Gateway where Las Piñas Mayor **Nene Aguilar** and his family also checked in.

At Park Lane in Nathan Road, ballroom royal **Aida Posadas**, now sporting a slim and svelte figure à la Jennifer Lopez, practically bought the entire stock of knit tops and shoes in one sassy boutique. Aida was escorted by noted stage actor **Ricky Hora**.

Leisurely strolling along Haiphong Road was Ambassador **Ernie Maceda** with his son **Erwin** and wife. *Manong* Ernie didn't miss the chance to pass around pocket calendars of senatorial bet **Loi Ejercito Estrada** to the Pinoys who greeted him on the street.

Among the faithfuls who attended the Good Friday service at the Holy Rosary Church in Chatham Road was GMA's prime news anchor **Mike Enriquez**. Incidentally, it was only in churches where there was a semblance of Holy Week in Hong Kong. Everywhere else, it was business as usual, with shops and restaurants remaining open and enjoying brisk sales even on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday.

Catching the last flight of Cathay Pacific on Easter Sunday, I bumped into model **Alta Tan** and high-power talent manager **Douglas Quijano** at the predeparture area. The two were with Bench boss **Ben Chan**, architect and interior designer **Miguel Pastor** and celebrity couple **Richard** and **Lucy Gomez** and their little **Juliana**, who all spent the long Easter holiday in London and Milan.

(SEATED) Giging Garcia, Jean Salvador, birthday girl Paz Javellana, Cor Yulo-Ebdalin and Inos Eugenio. (Behind) Edy MacKenzie, Lory Yulo, Belen Castro, Baby Javelosa, Estela Lopez, Moning Ascalon and Lulay Mapa

FRANK Chavez, Ken Fong and Linda Velayo-Fong

RAFFY Garcia, JC Gonzales, Anthony Suntay, Janelle So and Polo Trillo (standing)

Award for Connie

IN VIENNA, the vivacious **Connie Guanzon-Garcia** was awarded a plaque of recognition for her exemplary work in promoting social and civic involvement among the Filipinos lining in the Austrian capital. Connie is the wife of career diplomat **Victor Garcia III**, the Philippine ambassador to Austria.

The citation came from the Babaylan Foundation, an active and influential group of Filipino-Austrian women headed by **Cecil Cech**. A longtime resident of Vienna, Cech is the sister of Bacolod Rep. **John Orola Jr.** The awarding ceremonies were held at Volhoekhule Hietzing, a famous hotel in Vienna. **Linda Velayo**, one of the loveliest faces in Manila's social scene circa '60s, was in town recently. Now based in Hawaii, Linda came with her husband **Ken Fong**, a successful insurance executive.

At a luncheon held at the posh Rockwell Club organized by her longtime pal **Frank Evaristo** and attended by former Solicitor-General **Frank Chavez** and media gals **Joanne Ramirez**, **Chay Santiago**, **Monica Feria** and **Deedee Siytangco**, Linda amazed the guests with her youthful looks. Asked for her beauty secret, she quickly replied, "A happy home life with Ken, and plenty of Morinda's Tahitian Noni Juice!"

ERNIE Liwanag and Aida Posadas at the lobby of Marco Polo Gateway in Hong Kong

She was, of course, referring to the phenomenal health supplement drink extracted from a rare Tahitian fruit. The plug is not only well-deserved (I myself have been taking it for years) but also understandable. You see, Ken and Linda are the exclusive distributors of Morinda Noni Juice in the Philippines.

For a good cause

DOING a repeat of his birthday bash last year, sportscaster **Anthony Suntay** held an auction at his celebration recently at the Power Up Gym in Pasig. Proceeds went to the celebrator's pet charities like the PGH Pedia Ward, the Ma. Lena Buhay Foundation and the School for Children with Cerebral Palsy.

PBA star **Danny Siegel** outbidded everyone for the Northwest Airlines ticket to Los Angeles, while his brother **Andy** went home with a Samsung camera. Other big winners were Anthony's grandma, *lola* **Ling Javellana**, who got a JVC 21-inch flat TV; **Reggie Dumasig** who ran off with a VCD player and **Vic Oben** who fought tooth and nail for an original Oakley thermal jacket.

The guests were mostly sports luminaries like Vintage boss **Bobong Velez**, PBL Commissioner **Chino Trinidad**, PBA standouts **Alvin Patrimonio**, **Nick Belasco**, **Danny Ildefonso**, **Mick Pennisi**, **Chris Jackson** and **Jeffrey Cariaso** and Anthony' sportscasting buddies **Quinito Henson** and **Ed Picson**.

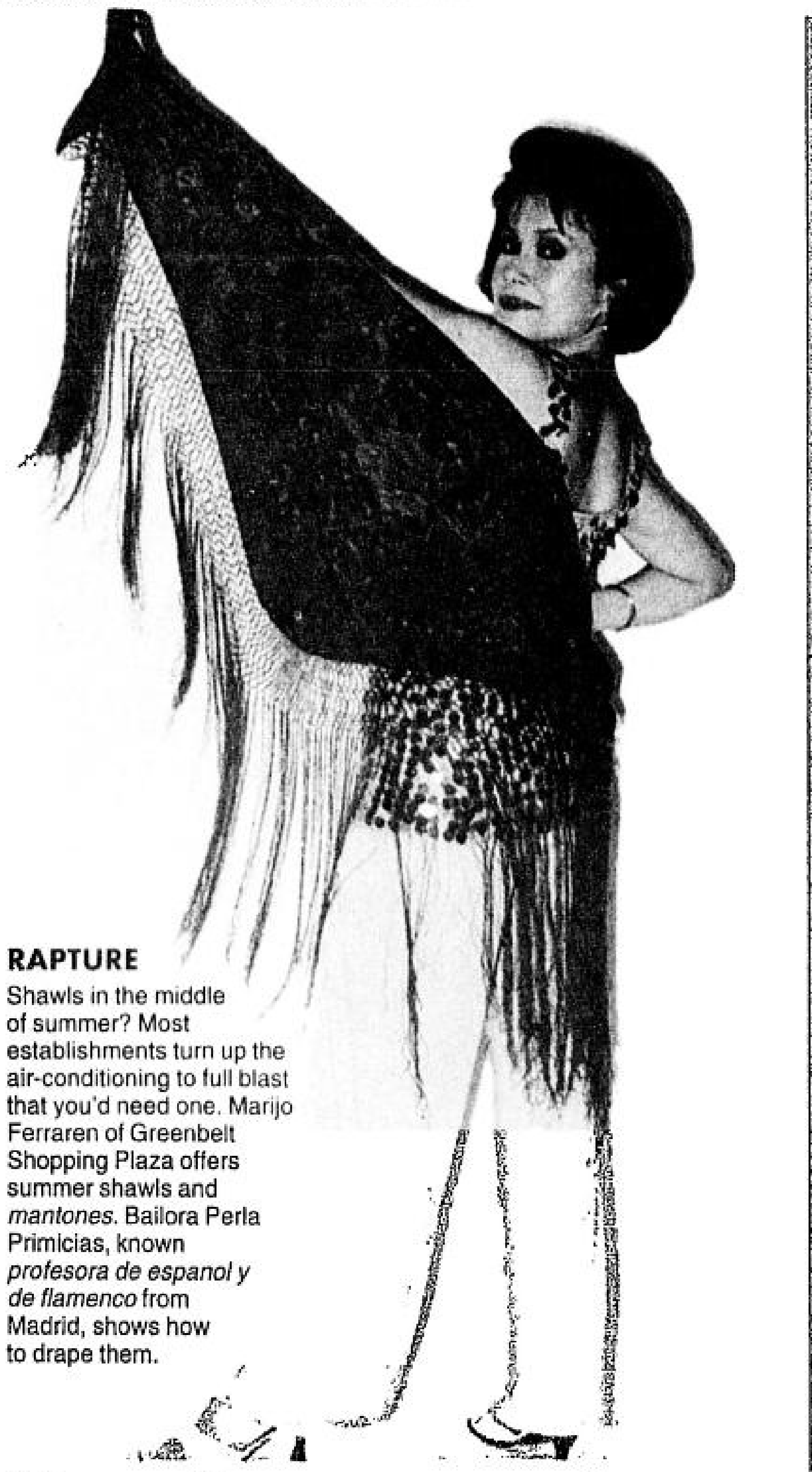
Here and there

ILONGGA socialite **Paz Javellana** hosted a hen luncheon at Makati Shangri-La Hotel's Conway's Bar to mark her recent birthday. The lively affair was attended by her close friends and former college chums like **Stein Lopez**, **Cor Yulo-Ebdalin**, **Inos Eugenio**, **Jean Salvador**, **Giging Garcia**, **Edy MacKenzie**, **Lory Yulo**, **Belen Castro**, **Baby Javelosa**, **Mong Ascalon** and **Lulay Mapa**.

* * *

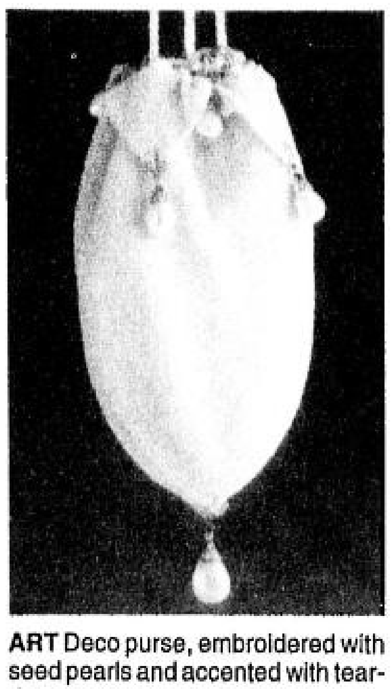
Meanwhile, the Friends of the CCP is all set to present their young artist-scholars at a cocktail musicale scheduled this Monday at the residence of founding chair **Chito Madrigal-Collantes**. The featured artists are 10-year-old violin prodigy **Eric Joseph Kumar** and 13-year-old piano wizard **Hannah Lynn Tan**.

The cocktail musicale is an annual event of the FCCP that provides a venue for young artists to show their talent. This year's special event committee is composed of director in charge **Fortune Ledesma**, cochairs **Annabelle Adriano** and **Nene Leonor**, and members **Tessie Amparo**, **Pillie Aquino**, **Celine Bautista**, **Nena Casimiro**, **Tess Castro**, **Puring Galano**, **Chit Gohu**, **Karen Macasaet**, **Olga Martel**, **Chloe Romulo-Periquet**, **Roi Phillips**, **Millie Reyes** and **Boysie Villavicencio**. The incumbent FCCP prez is **Thelma Gana**.



RAPTURE
Shawls in the middle of summer? Most establishments turn up the air-conditioning to full blast that you'd need one. Marijo Ferraren of Greenbelt Shopping Plaza offers summer shawls and *mantones*. Bailora Perla Primicias, known *profesora de espanol y de flamenco* from Madrid, shows how to drape them.

Pearls are cool



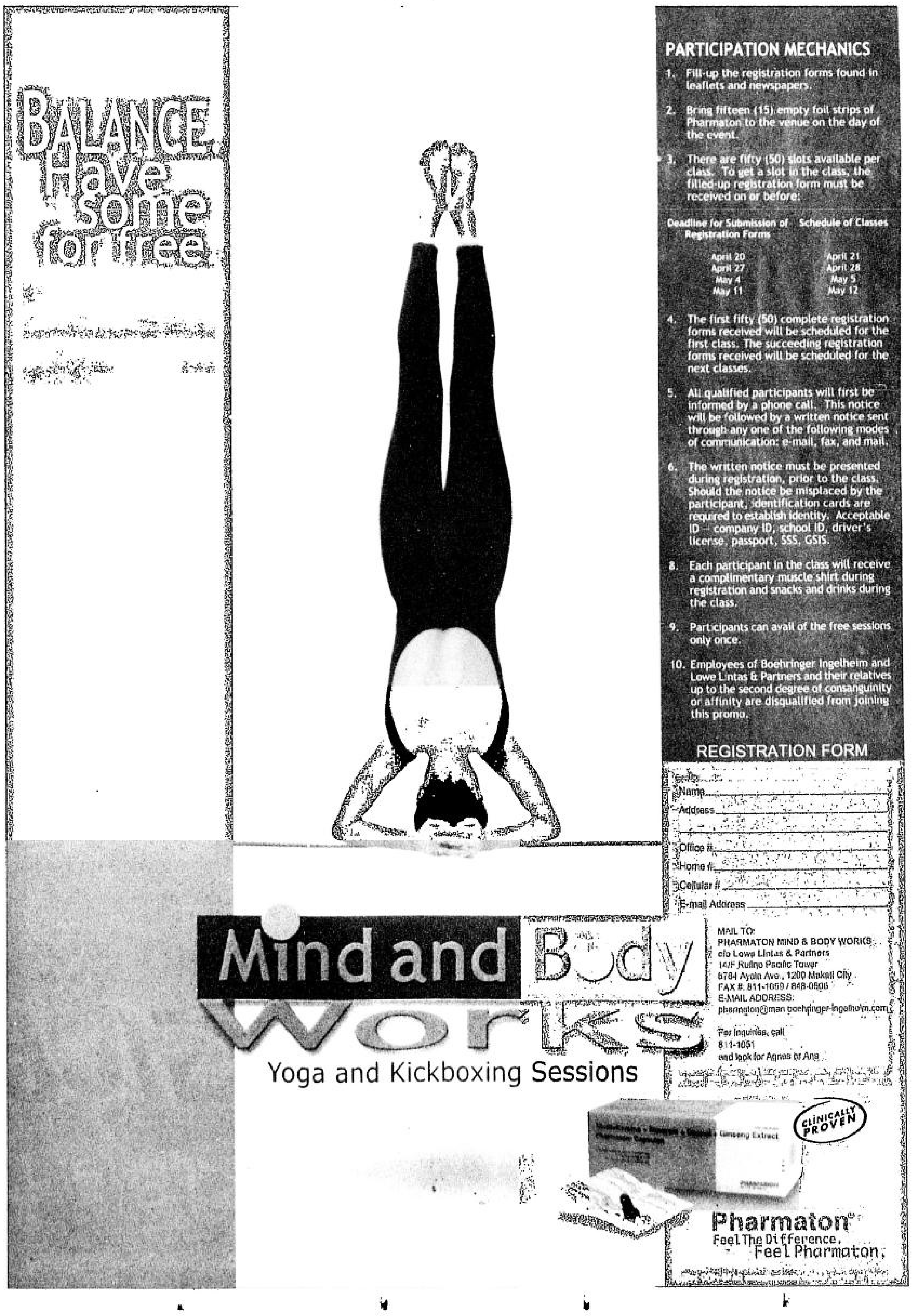
ART Deco purse, embroidered with seed pearls and accented with teardrop pearls

BEING fashionable is not the only quality which makes pearls the ideal choice for summer. Their special quality as organic gems enable pearls to remain cool on the skin even while under the heat of the sun. In contrast, metallic accessories become hot under such climate.

Pearls possess a glow that shines with the sunlight. The glow sets off a summer tan, the pearl's color and luster contrasting with darkened skin.

South Sea pearls from the Philippines come in a range of warm, natural colors that complement various clothing styles and outfits.

A wide collection of South Sea pearls are available at Jewelmer with showrooms located at SM Megamall, Holiday Inn, The Peninsula Manila, Ayala Center Cebu, Edsa Plaza Hotel, Makati Shangri-La and Glorietta IV.



BALANCE. Have some for free

PARTICIPATION MECHANICS

1. Fill-up the registration forms found in leaflets and newspapers.
2. Bring fifteen (15) empty foil strips of Pharmaton to the venue on the day of the event.
3. There are fifty (50) slots available per class. To get a slot in the class, the filled-up registration form must be received on or before:

Deadline for Submission of Registration Forms	Schedule of Classes
April 20	April 21
April 27	April 28
May 4	May 5
May 11	May 12

4. The first fifty (50) complete registration forms received will be scheduled for the first class. The succeeding registration forms received will be scheduled for the next classes.
5. All qualified participants will first be informed by a phone call. This notice will be followed by a written notice sent through any one of the following modes of communication: e-mail, fax, and mail.
6. The written notice must be presented during registration, prior to the class. Should the notice be misplaced by the participant, identification cards are required to establish identity. Acceptable ID – company ID, school ID, driver's license, passport, SSS, GSIS.
8. Each participant in the class will receive a complimentary muscle shirt during registration and snacks and drinks during the class.
9. Participants can avail of the free sessions only once.
10. Employees of Boehringer Ingelheim and Lowe Lintas & Partners and their relatives up to the second degree of consanguinity or affinity are disqualified from joining this promo.

REGISTRATION FORM

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Home #
Cellular #
E-mail Address

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PHARMATON MIND & BODY WORKS
c/o Lowe Lintas & Partners
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6784 Ayala Ave., 1200 Makati City
FAX #: 811-1059 / 848-0606
E-MAIL ADDRESS:
pharmaton@man.boehringer-ingelheim.com

For inquiries, call
811-1051
and look for Agnes or Ana

Mind and Body Works
Yoga and Kickboxing Sessions

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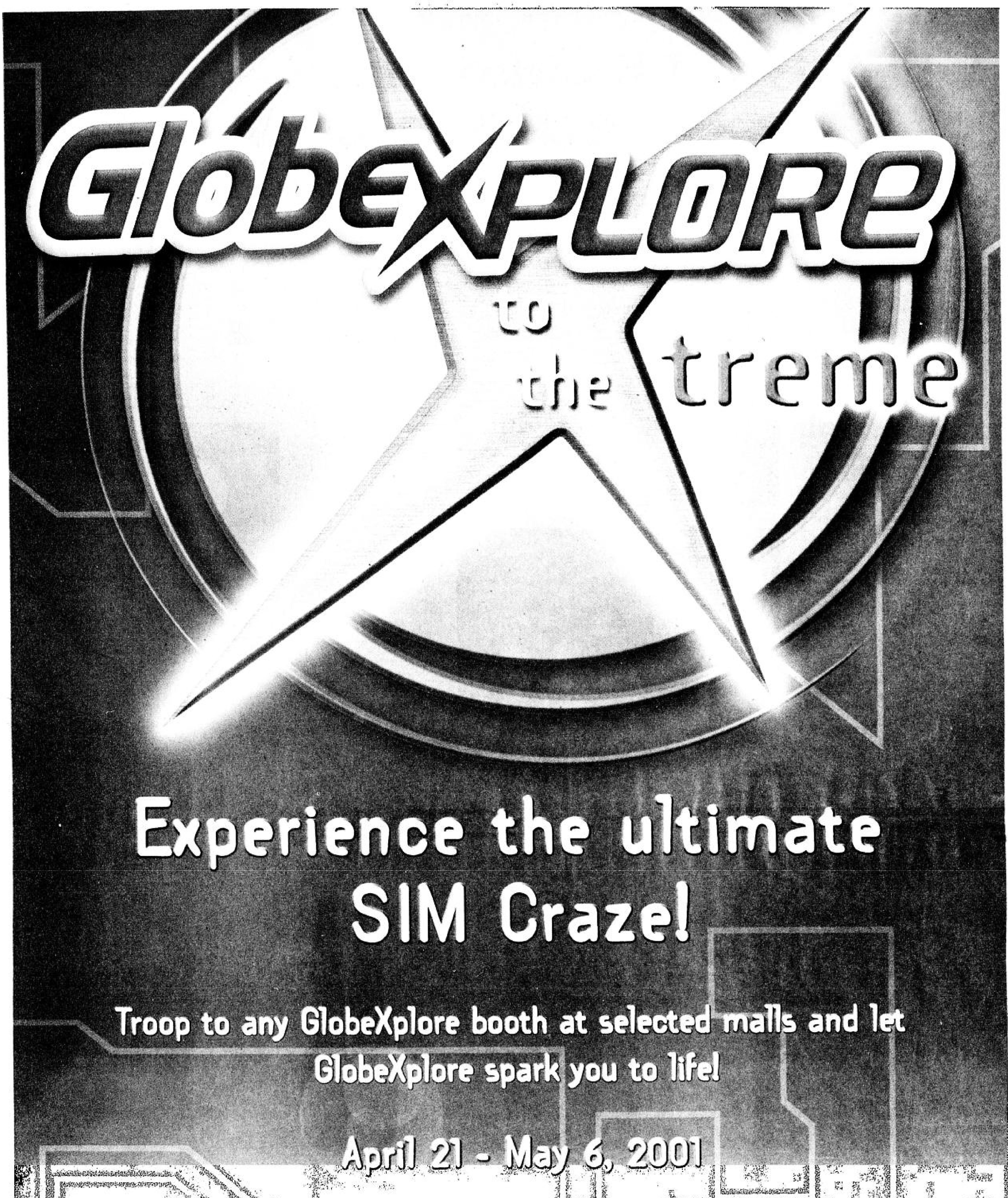
Feel Pharmaton.



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Coyeesan Mall Baguio • NE Pacific Mall Cabanatuan • Ayala Center Cebu • Gaisano Mall Davao
Robinson's Bacolod • Gaisano Mall Cagayan de Oro • KCC Mall General Santos

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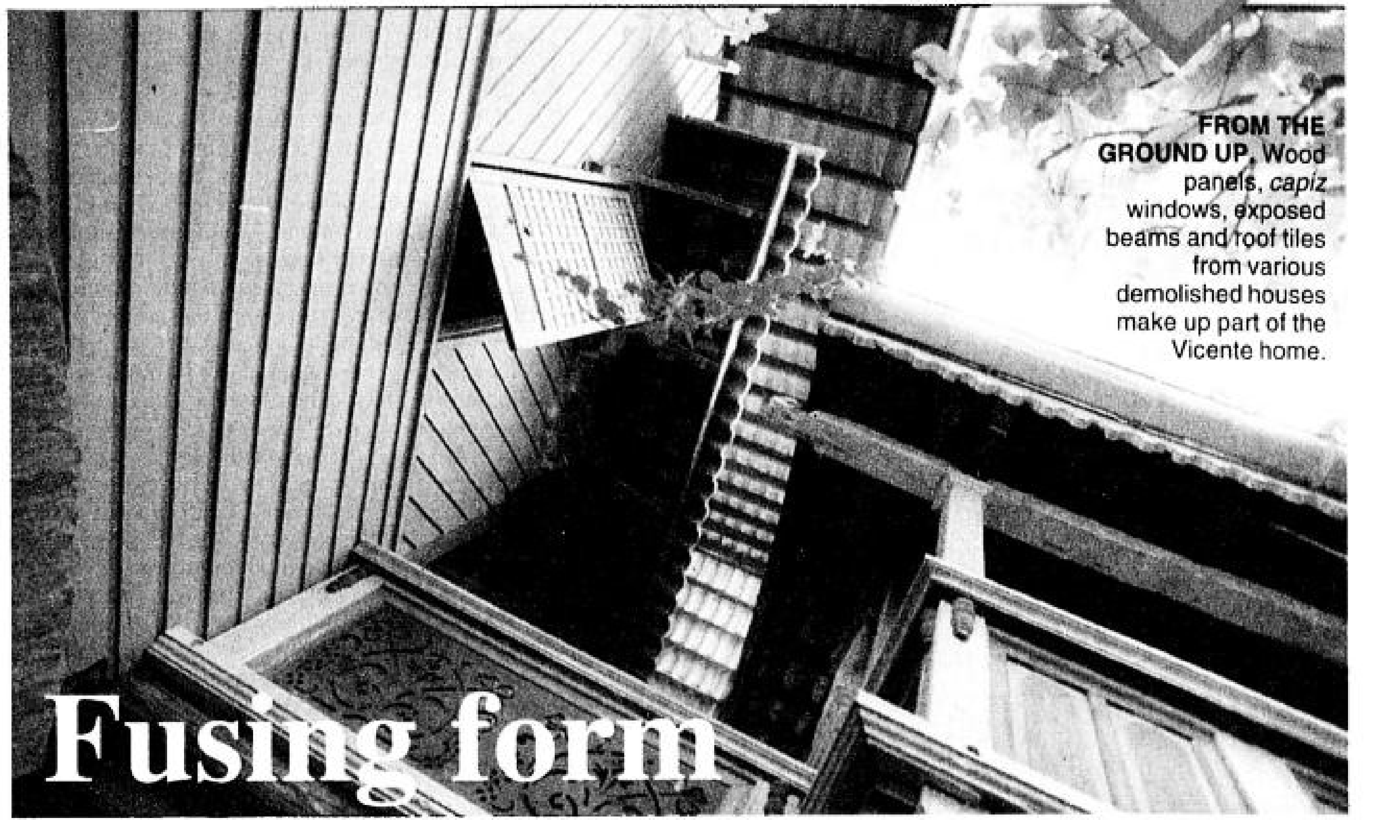
LIFESTYLE Home



FROM THE GROUND UP. Wood panels, *capiz* windows, exposed beams and roof tiles from various demolished houses make up part of the Vicente home.

Fusing form and function, old and new

BY ALEX Y. VERGARA
PHOTOS BY BOBOT MERU

ATTEMPTS to merge parts of an old house with a new one have already become a dime a dozen, but have you ever come across a home built almost entirely of myriad pieces taken from dwellings built during the Spanish and American eras?

Businessman Jose Vicente did just that, sourcing blocks of bricks and adobe from one house and integrating them with panels, doorframes and window jambs made of old hardwood from another. The result? A quaint abode composed of three separate structures somewhere in Alabang.

As much as possible, antique stairs, sliding windows, *bandejas* and *ventanillas* were kept intact and incorporated in such a way that they melded seamlessly. The place probably is full of anachronistic elements any astute architect or conservationist could spot a mile away. But Vicente vouches for their structural soundness.

"To tell you frankly," he says with a chuckle. "Because of their sheer volume, I now find it impossible to make an inventory of each item. Except for a few signature elements, I've already forgotten where I sourced bits of odds and ends."

For instance, one of Vicente's favorite pieces, a vivid piece of stained glass that shines through the dark adobe wall by the stairs leading to his bedroom came from the old Swiss Inn in Manila. He was quick enough to buy the piece and several other items when the hotel was torn down.

Instead of doing an image of a Swiss village or religious icon so popular back then, Krout, the German stained-glass company, fashioned a pair of colorful *vintas* bobbing at sea. Many of his friends find it weird, but Vicente loves the local scene done in a medium that's unmistakably foreign.

Even the rough brick and adobe walls hide a number of stories beneath their crevices.

"People who go for minimalist interiors may find these houses too busy for their taste," he admits. "So

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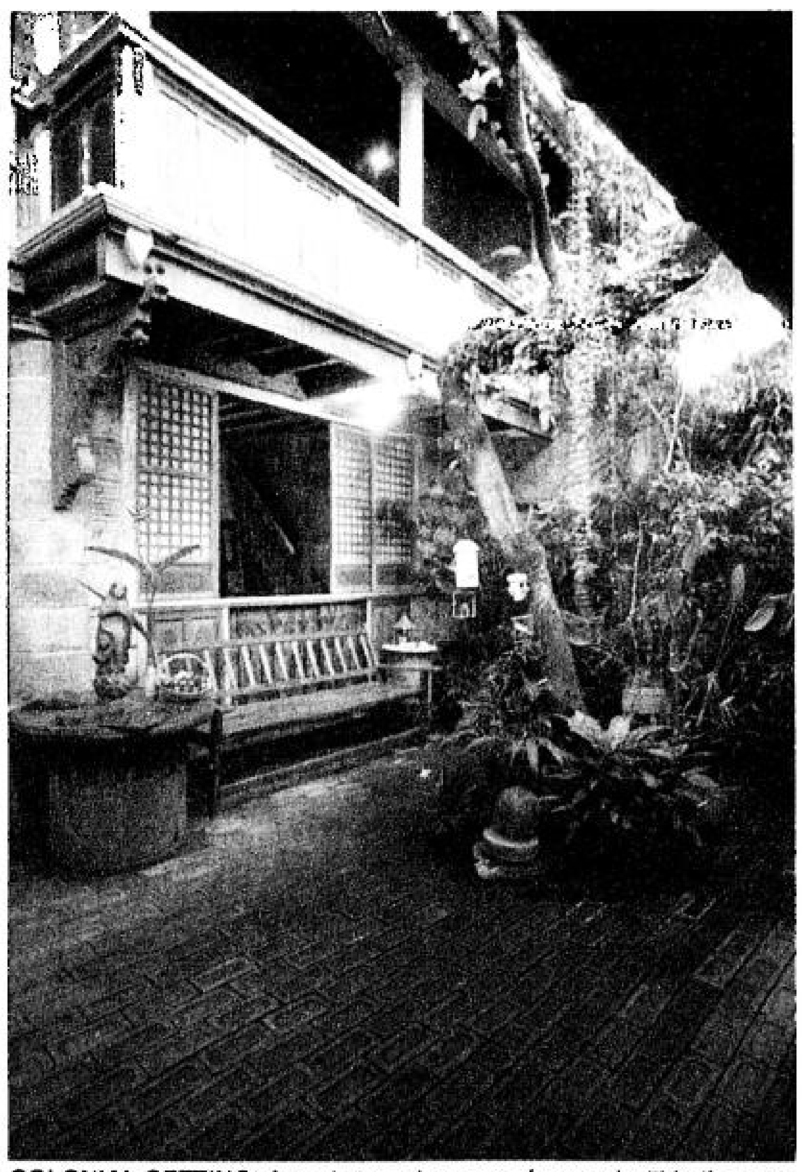

COLONIAL SETTING. A pocket garden, one of several within the compound, adds to the bygone feel. Like the two other structures in the compound, the house pictured above assembles a mélange of second-hand components from prewar homes. Yellow and muted red brighten up the naturally distressed *bandejas*, an ideal foil to dull blocks of adobe below.

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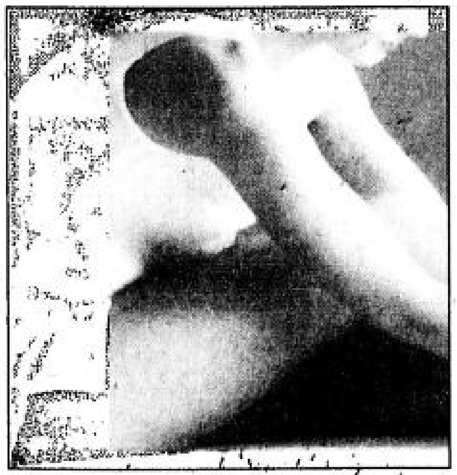

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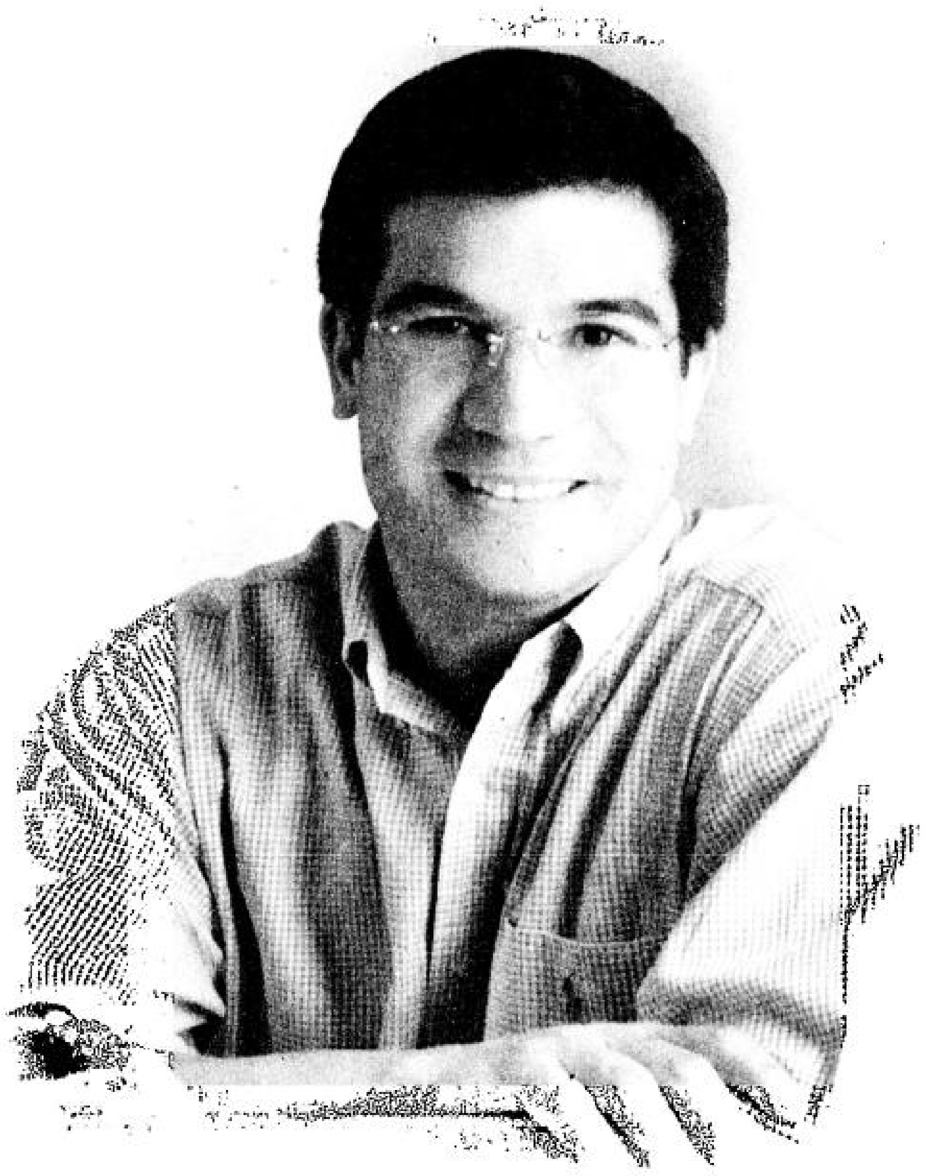

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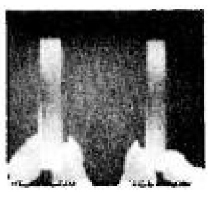

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(From page D1)

I've pared down the furniture and accent pieces to a minimum."

But such elements as exposed ceilings that reveal a network of wooden beams are decorative in themselves. From the outside, carved wrought-iron grills, wooden brackets, *bandejas* and *balustreng de turno*, which support the intricate transoms, are conversation pieces as well.

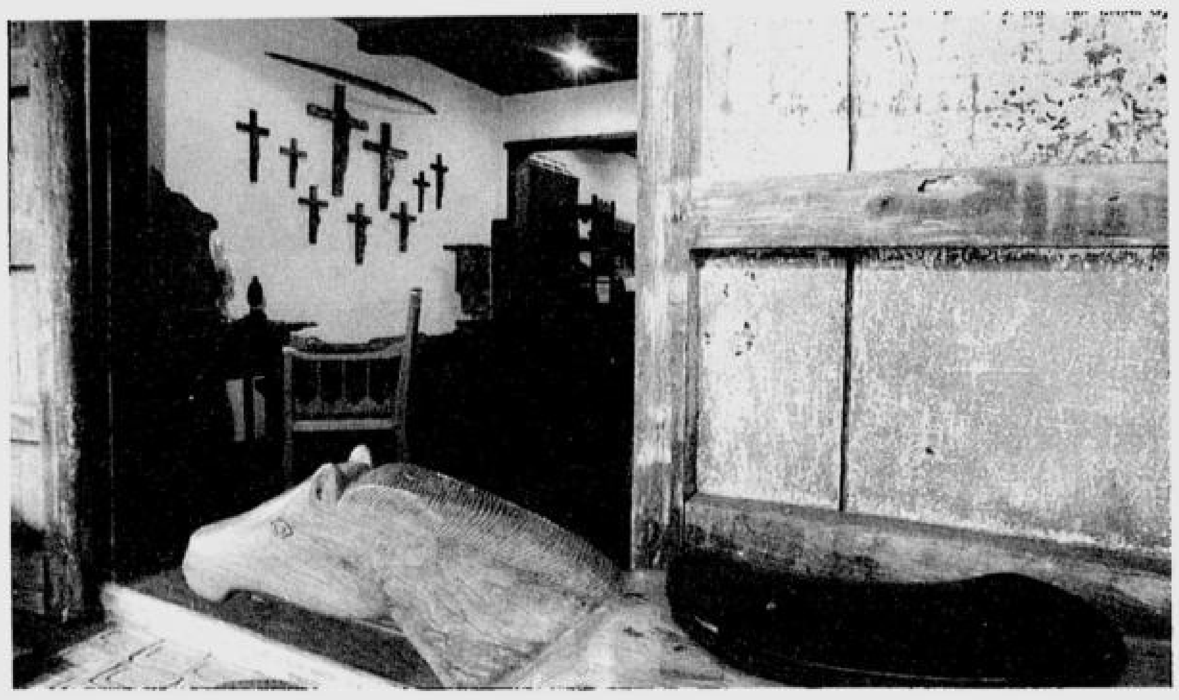
Does an unseen presence usually come with such antique pieces?

"Well, so far we haven't seen or felt one [ghost]," Vicente shrugs. "Besides, I did them no harm, so why should I be afraid of them? The only thing I watch out for are cobwebs. Spiders and other insects love to hide and spin their webs in exposed corners of the ceiling."

Meeting one's lifestyle

Thanks to huge doors, open-air balconies, sliding *capiz* windows and *ventanillas*, the Vicentes, perhaps like their ancestors, have found no need for power-hungry air conditioners.

"Overcrowded neighborhoods and Western-style houses have made the heat unbearable," he says. "There was not enough electricity back then to power huge air conditioners, so people built houses with big windows, high ceilings and balconies to keep themselves cool."



REPRO HAVEN. Reproduced furniture pieces and crosses are displayed on the ground floor of the main house

The breeze, however, also brings with it dust and bloodthirsty mosquitoes. Screening entire openings is out of the question. Not only is it impractical, but doing so would mar the houses' turn-of-the-century beauty.

Vicente, however, is confident places like Batangas wouldn't run out of *mosquiteros* anytime soon. Even Ikea in Hong Kong sells them. Vicente bought a round one, the kind with a circular rod that can be spread around the bed to keep nighttime insects at bay.

"Form will follow function," he adds. "Whatever look or theme you've set out to do, be sure the finished product conforms with your needs and lifestyle."

Vicente has vivid childhood memories of living in a *bahay na bato*, or what was left of it.

He and his siblings grew up in a rundown Spanish-era house his parents used to rent in Quiapo. But never in his wildest dreams did he entertain thoughts of one day owning not one but three adjacent structures in the sprawling family compound.

"I viewed life as it unfolded in the streets of Quiapo from a *ventanilla*," he reminisces. "I remember playing with my friends by the stairs with shaky handrails."

But while the house of Vicente's youth was made of original materials gone rickety with time and neglect, his dream home came to life, thanks to sturdy and still usable portions of demolished houses.

Surprisingly, the commerce graduate knew nothing about architecture, much less the difference between, say, a *pasamano* (window ledge) from a *jamba* (window jamb) before he embarked on building his present house in the late 1970s.

"I used to be in the plant and landscape business," he says. "Although I probably know a beautiful house when I see one, I knew very little about old houses."

That was before he started accompanying architect and interior designer friends to out-of-town buying trips. Aside from condemned and neglected houses, burned-down dwellings are rich sources of salvageable parts, from wrought-iron grills, wooden baluster, huge doors and doorframes.

From Binondo, they soon found themselves scouring towns in Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija and the Ilocos Region in search of good buys. They soon ventured south to Laguna, Batangas and, of course, culture-rich Quezon.

"The exposure soon opened my mind to various possibilities," he says.

Since old materials are often cheaper and sturdier than those currently available in the market, Vicente hit upon the idea of building his home from a hodgepodge of second-hand building components.

Antique feel

From live plants, it didn't take long before he started earning a living buying and selling inanimate objects.

He sought the services of architects Joey Selga and Romy Delfinado before putting the pieces together. Good friends Connie and Tito Castro honed his taste while providing him with ideas.

From a main house, he soon had an adjoining dining room and kitchen built. A third house, another two-story structure made of wood and adobe, functions as Vicente's office and private quarters.

The three houses collectively double as a showroom since he decided to become a full-time dealer of used pieces. Vicente's love affair with vintage objects extends to antique furniture pieces.

A part of the compound has been turned into a work area where experienced furniture-makers churn out repros made of old wood that hark back to a bygone age. A vacant lot behind the property has been turned into a temporary repository of used building parts and old wood.

"I'm able to use the vacant lot through the kindness of its owners," he says.

Despite going into another line of business, Vicente remains a staunch plant lover. If anything, the family's property resembles a mini turn-of-the-century village of colonial houses interspersed with lush trees and pocket gardens or ornamental greens.

The antique feel is literally sprawled on the courtyard where excess pieces of bricks from the old San Miguel brewery in Manila are cobbled together. Instead of using cement, Vicente stuck the bricks beneath a thick layer of sand to keep them even and hold them together.

Before the advent of hollow blocks with steel support, it was common to see brick buildings with walls as thick as a meter.

Layers of bricks and roof tiles were usually joined together by lime or *apog* mixed with, believe it or not, egg white and molasses. This probably explains why they can easily be disjoined while remaining virtually intact.

Whether yesterday's walls became a magnet for ants and other crawling insects due to the rich materials that glued them together is another story.

But who says you can't combine old materials with modern-day techniques? Vicente, for instance, produced the look on certain areas of the main house by using a layer of 19th-century brick held together underneath by bags of 20th-century cement.

Glazed Vigan tiles make up the ground floor, while used hardwood that doubles as exposed first-floor ceiling make up the second floor.

Old bricks were also dismantled and converted into a wood-fired oven. This time, however, Vicente did away with lime and all the gooey foodstuff in favor of cement to put the bricks together.

FUSING/ p.D4

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A new Old Manila rises

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

EVERY room should have an ambience, but a dining room or restaurant needs an added dose of it. To create a mood that will heighten the eating experience, space is interpreted along the lines of a theater set. Guests appreciate the effort exerted in choosing the tablecloth, plates and silver, the dramatic centerpiece as well as the solicitous service.

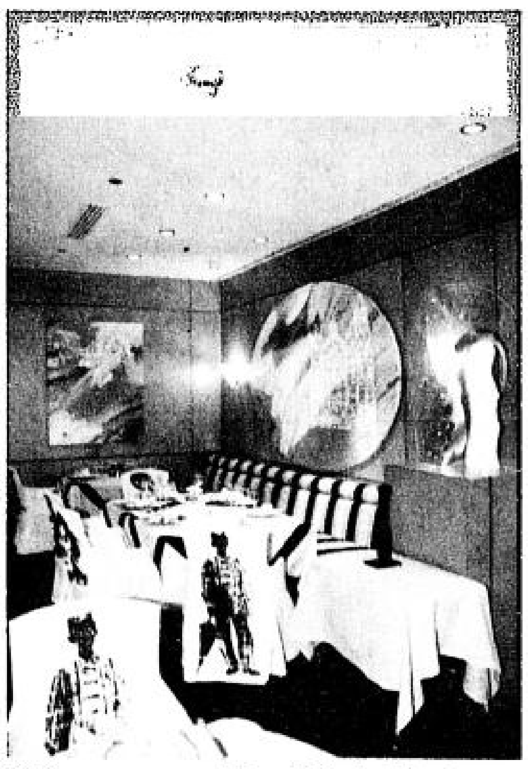
What is suitable décor for dining places varies.

By convention, red was considered a good background as it stimulated the appetite. Portraits were supposed to be the right stuff to line the walls. Solid colors were favored over pale ones, as they were believed to create a cordial mood allowing diners to savor their food. Strong patterns were thought to interfere with digestion.

But today, diners can eat surrounded by vivid patterns and still enjoy the food. A sparsely decorated room can, in fact, make diners feel uneasy, like they were in some consecrated space. Good tablecloths and seat covers cover the ravages of time or other flaws, provided the fabrics are integrated with the room and don't give the perception of being an afterthought.

In a bid to widen its market, Peninsula's Old Manila has transformed its traditional style of décor into a more relaxed setting, reflecting the present approach to entertaining. The fine dining scene in Manila is in a slump. It's not necessarily due to the economic situation. Trendy and casual restaurants are giving the hotels a run for the money. Today, informality is a keynote in dining.

Although Old Manila is a still a favorite among connoisseurs, it had seen better days. To enhance the dining experience, Old Manila has come up with something more contemporary aside from the creative cuisine of the new Chef de Cuisine Nicolas de Visch and the guidance of the new food and beverage director Larry E. Cowle.



SLIP covers conceal the old chairs. The images of the modern and old Filipinos reflect the concept of the new Old Manila.

As part of its promotion, the Peninsula is collaborating with local artists. Art is one way to change the environment. Impy Pilapil has been a loyal clientele and a friend of the Pen. She frequently attends the cooking demonstrations. The hotel invited her to display her works in the restaurant.

Old Manila chucked in its paintings depicting the 19th century images for Pilapil's scintillating artworks. The main mural is titled "Ocean," Pilapil's favorite subject. It is a glass relief fused with handblown glass pebbles and wavy etchings.

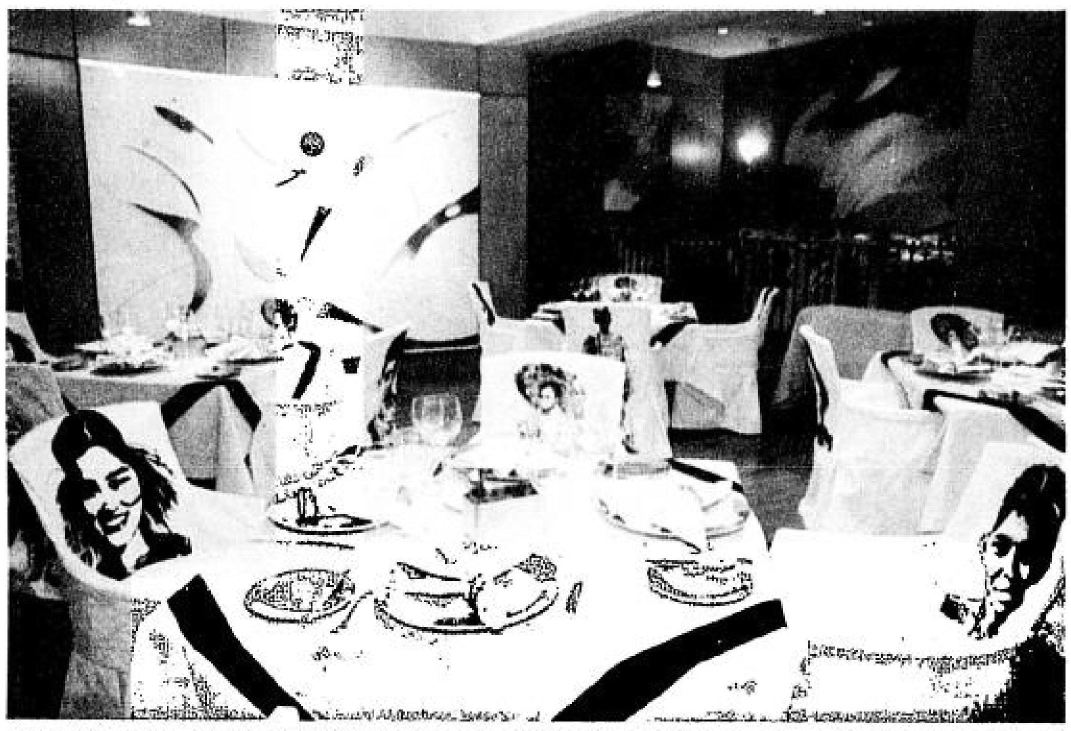
The walls are filled with huge canvasses in splashes of vibrant colors, contrasted with shapes in white, designed by Pilapil. There are unexpected decorative touches such as a tree called "Sea Blossoms," made of handblown glass pebbles and white marble and Pilapil's curved glass sculpture, accented with solid colors. Pilapil's artistic trademarks dominate the menu design.

Lighting is very important especially with all the new artworks. Old Manila installed picture lights so diners can appreciate the paintings. They also create a romantic mood and provide restrained lighting.

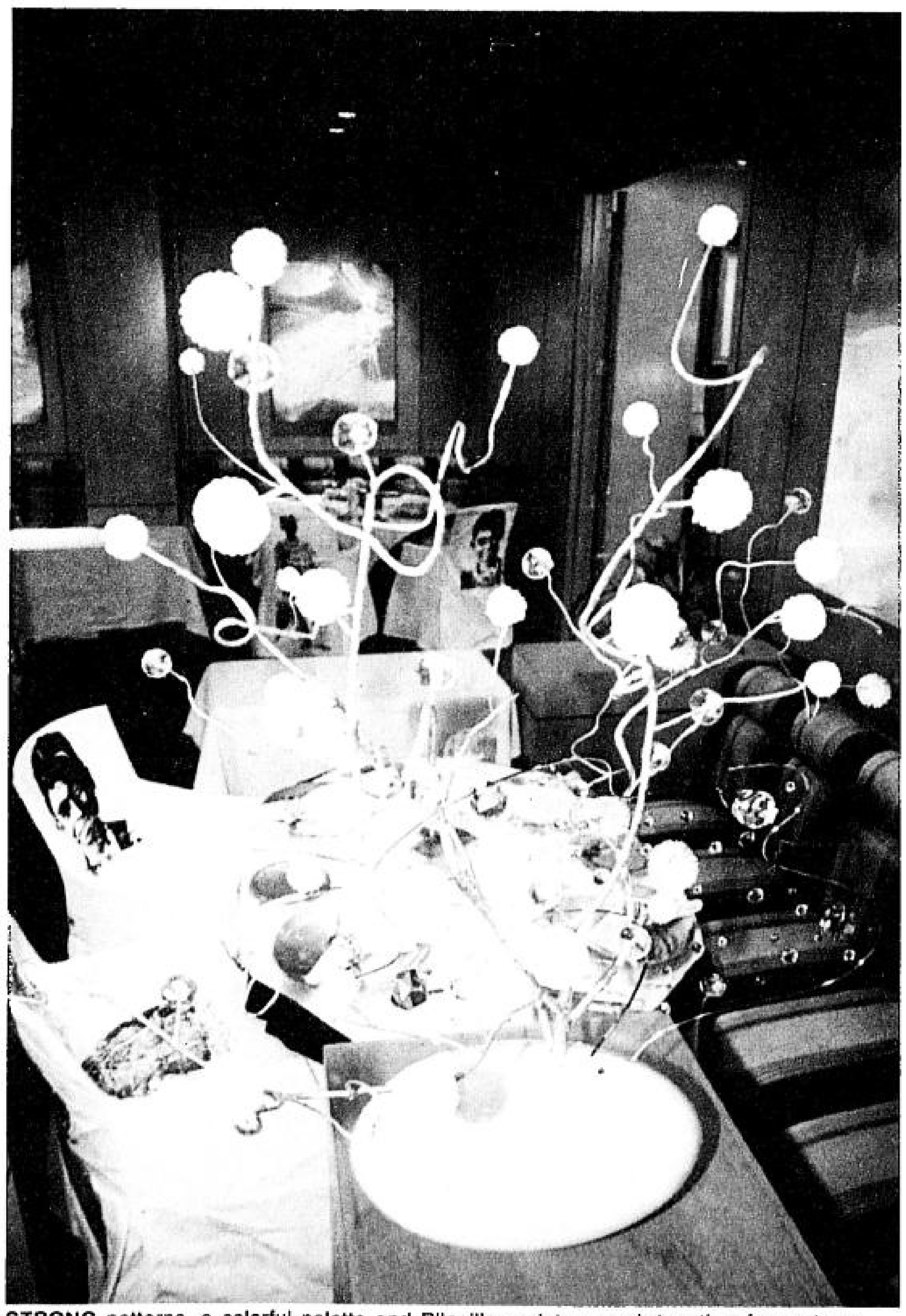
Instead of buying new furniture, the chairs are covered with white canvas imprinted with images of traditional and modern Filipinos. The tables are covered in silk blend fabrics in tan and black edging. Even the dining accessories have been modernized. The underplates and ashtrays are made of stainless steel. Napkin rings are coils of mixed beads. Soon the hotel will incorporate Pilapil's glass plates.

All these are meant to highlight the new menu, which is lighter, fresher and a fusion of Asian and European influences.

Marge C. Enriquez



THIS assertive scheme for Old Manila centers on the large-scale artwork by Impy Pilapil and is not a style for the timid.



STRONG patterns, a colorful palette and Pilapil's sculpture work together for a strong, albeit busy effect.

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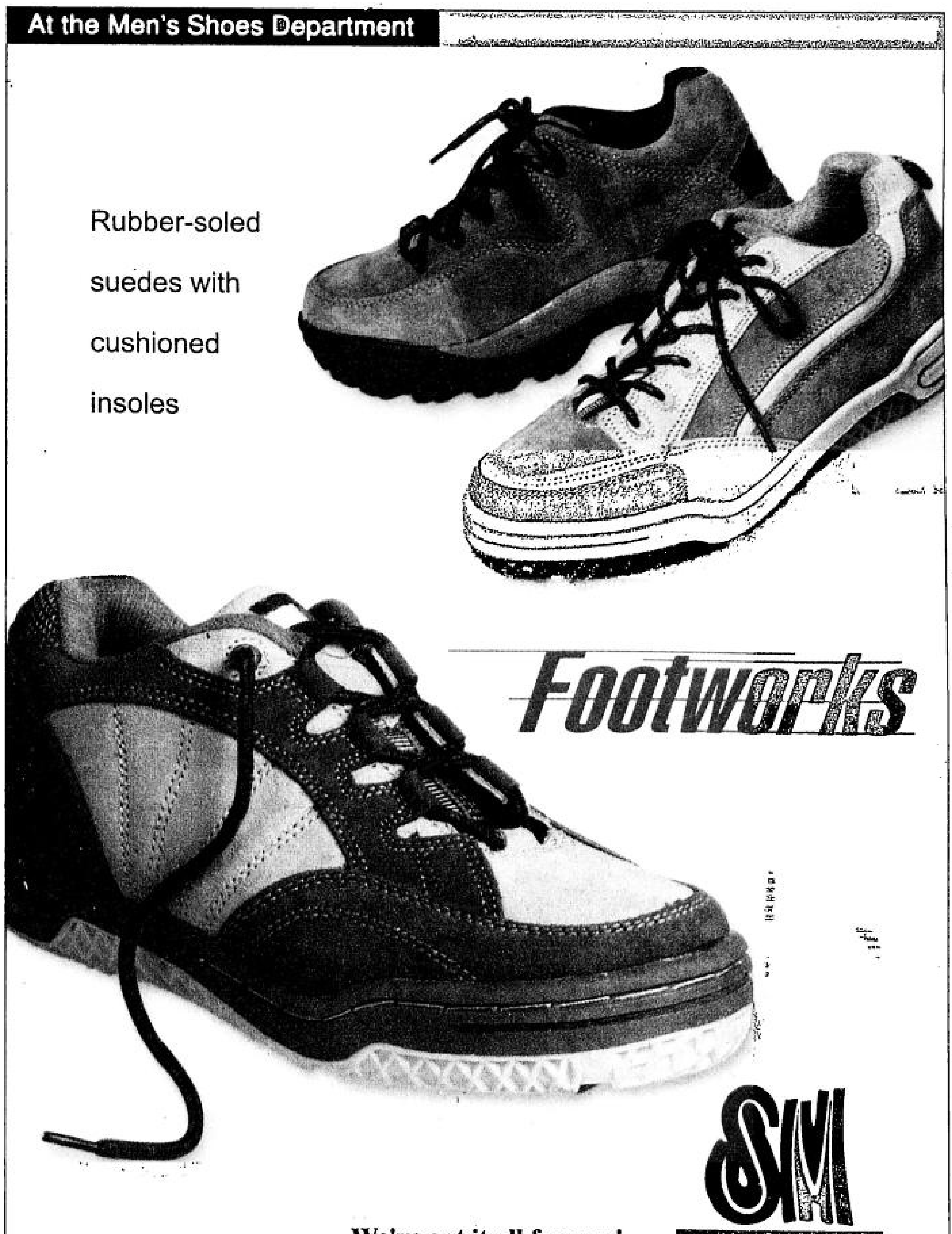

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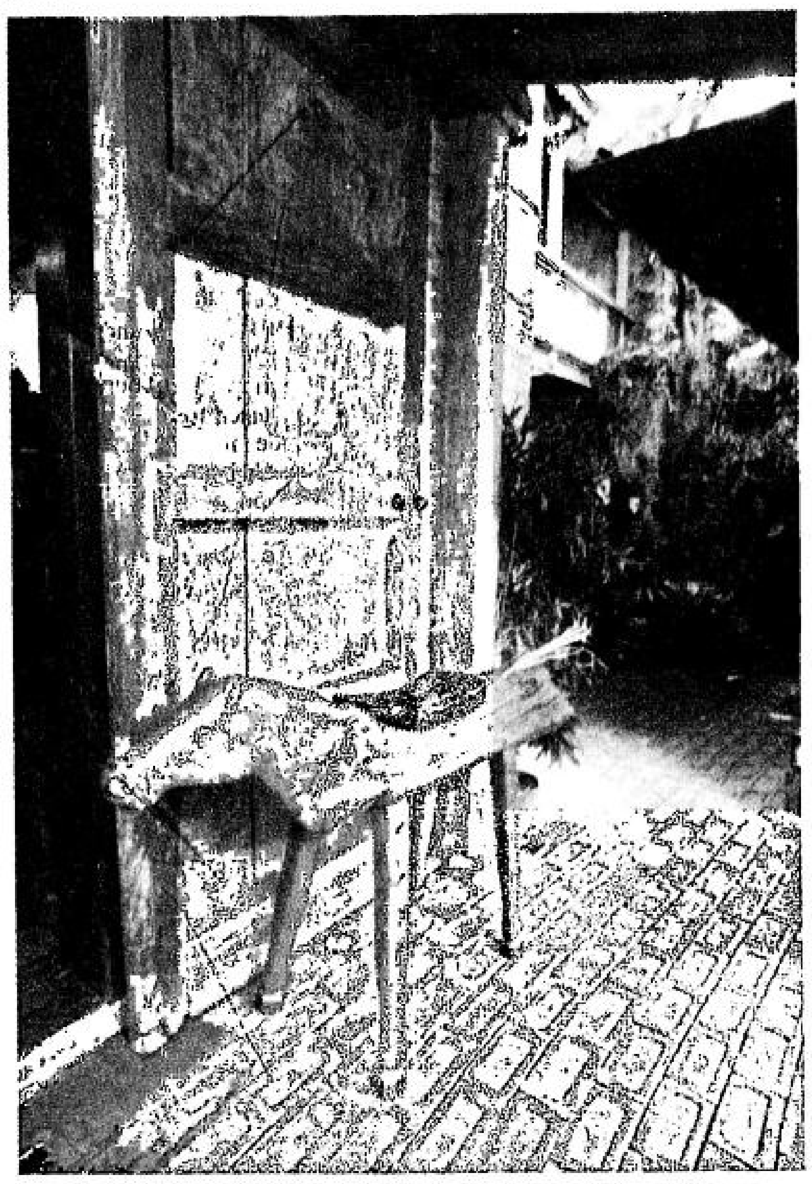
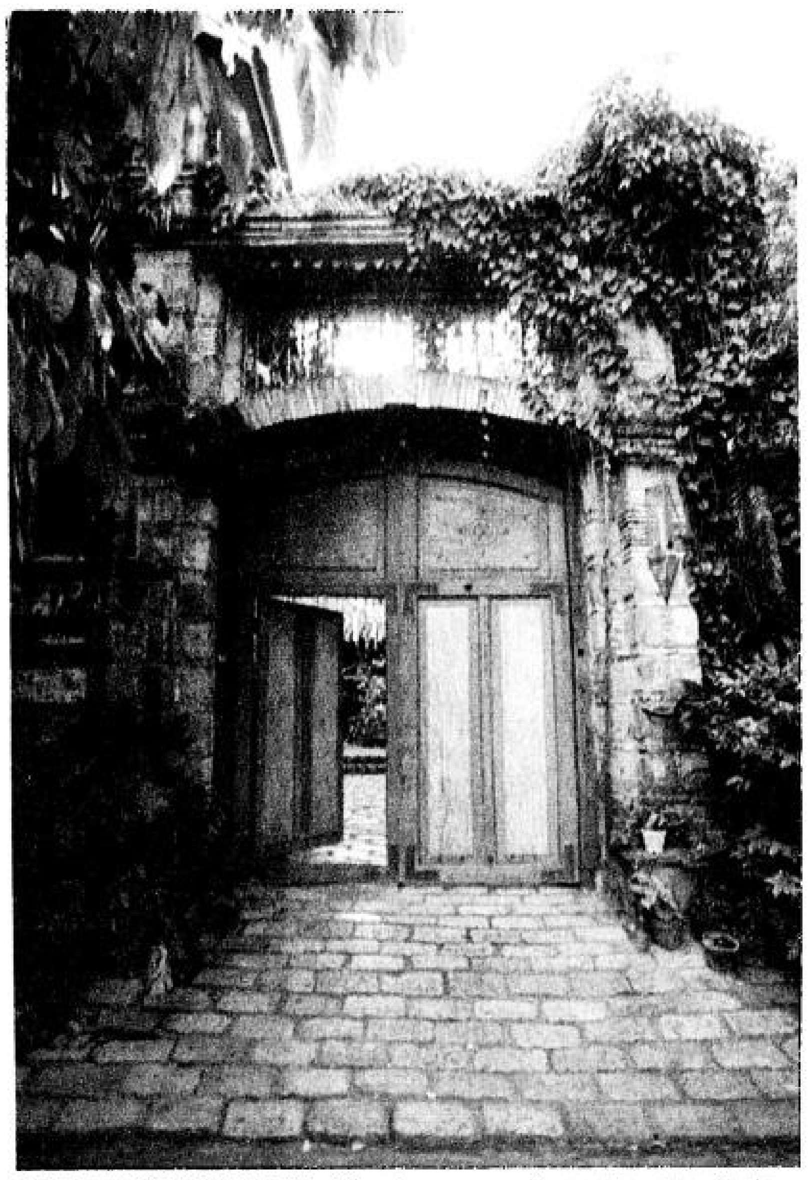
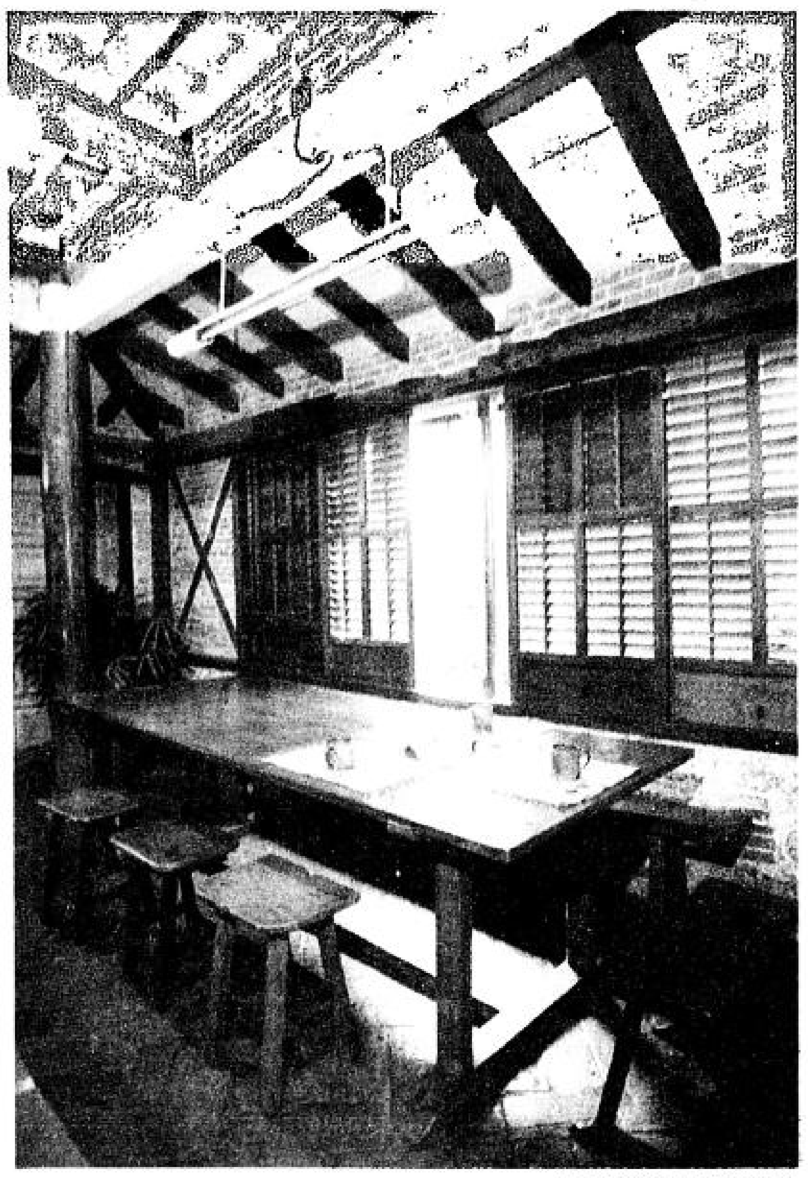


WHEN OLD BECOMES NEW. A new saw horse made from vintage hard wood stands beside a huge old door that has stood the test of time. Note brick floor from the old San Miguel brewery in Manila.



STEP INTO THE PAST. The Vicente compound's *puerta mayor* (main door) with an open *postigo* (pedestrian door) framed by adobe walls and a brick arch.



PIECED TOGETHER. Vicente and his team fashioned chairs from *narra* and the dining table from unknown pieces of wood. Exposed wooden beams and bricks again provide the area with texture and character.

Fusing form and function, old and new

Businessman Jose Vicente finds fulfillment in building a new house from vintage pieces taken from ancestral homes

(From page D2)

"Of course, we still use a gas range," he insists. "But this brick oven is ideal for *kare-kare* and other slow-fired *palambutin*."

Unity in disparity

The family's three bathrooms also married form with function. The one near the kitchen, for instance, combines such disparate elements as old bricks and adobe, vintage doors and machuca tiles. A sloping ceiling reveals wooden beams.

Sturdy pieces of *jambas* were salvaged from a fire and fashioned into a niche for the mirror. A thick brick wall with a pair of swinging glass windows separates the shower stall from a secluded pocket garden. Roof tiles were cut into two and converted into a pair of wall lamps. Every wooden component in the bathroom is of vintage quality.

"The *jambas* got its distinct dark color from the fire," says Vicente. "Others are ill at ease to take a bath here because they feel exposed. They still have to close the windows. Not me. I leave them wide open to imbibe the world outside."

Instead of a heavy door, sliding European glass panels framed again by old wood lead to the second-floor bathroom. Exposed rafters and roof tiles provide drama and texture to the entire area.

Vicente chose hard wood in favor of ceramic tiles for the bathroom floor, except for the shower stall concealed by concrete and 1950s-style glass blocks. A dormer window and a mini balcony offers a view of lush treetops.

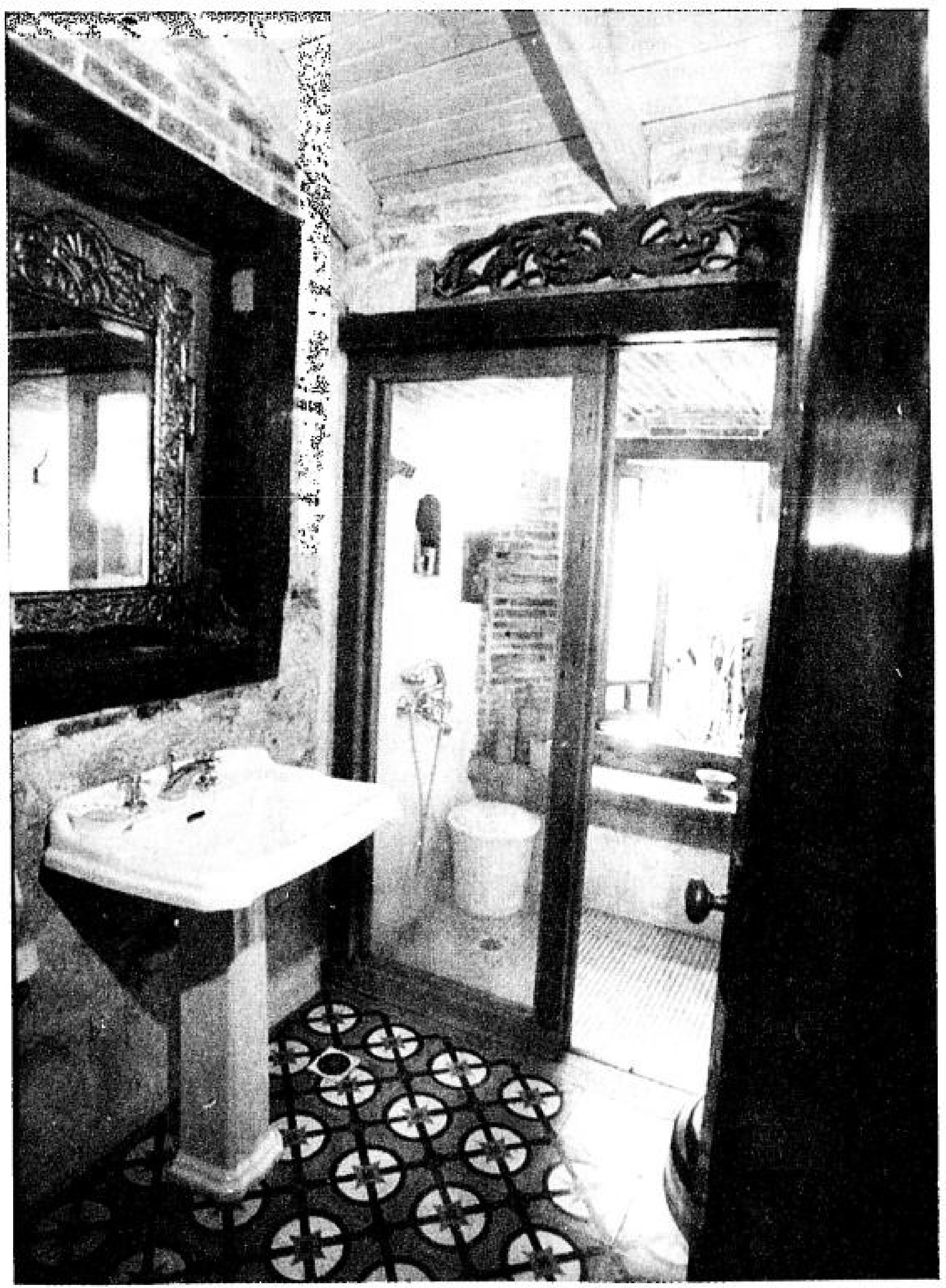
Vicente is aware of how certain sectors, particularly traditional conservationists, frown on the practice of stripping materials from old or burned-down houses for future use. He views it differently.

"On the contrary," he says, "we're reviving a part of our history, while saving architectural heritage from certain oblivion. Whether we like it or not, these houses are going to be torn down anyway.

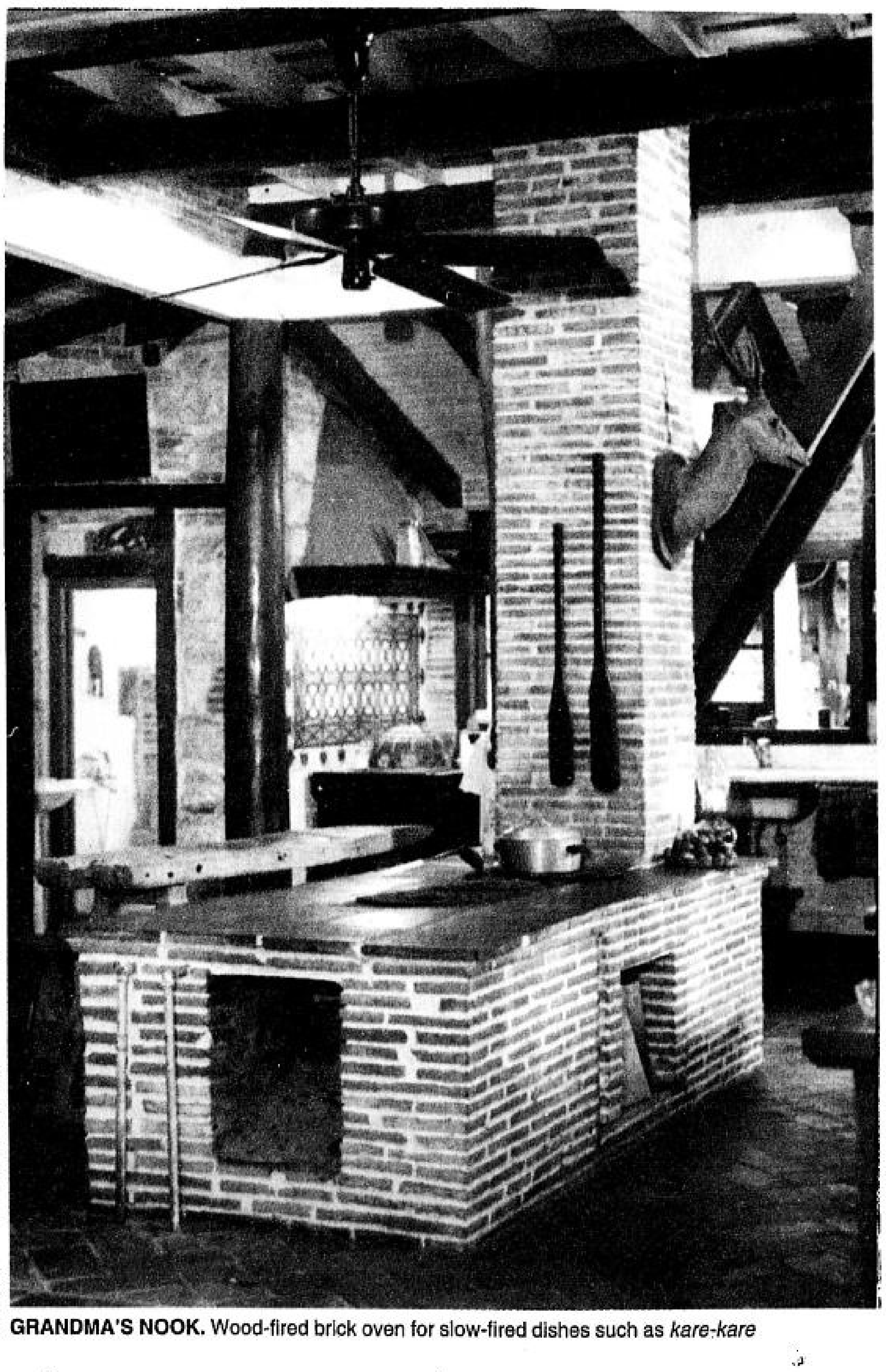
"Succeeding generations are either not interested or too poor to maintain their ancestral homes. With no support from the government, some find it impractical to restore their homes."

Like him, a growing number of Filipinos are now finding it more fulfilling to build new homes from vintage parts. They may appear older, but they're cheaper and definitely more unique than today's homogenized units.

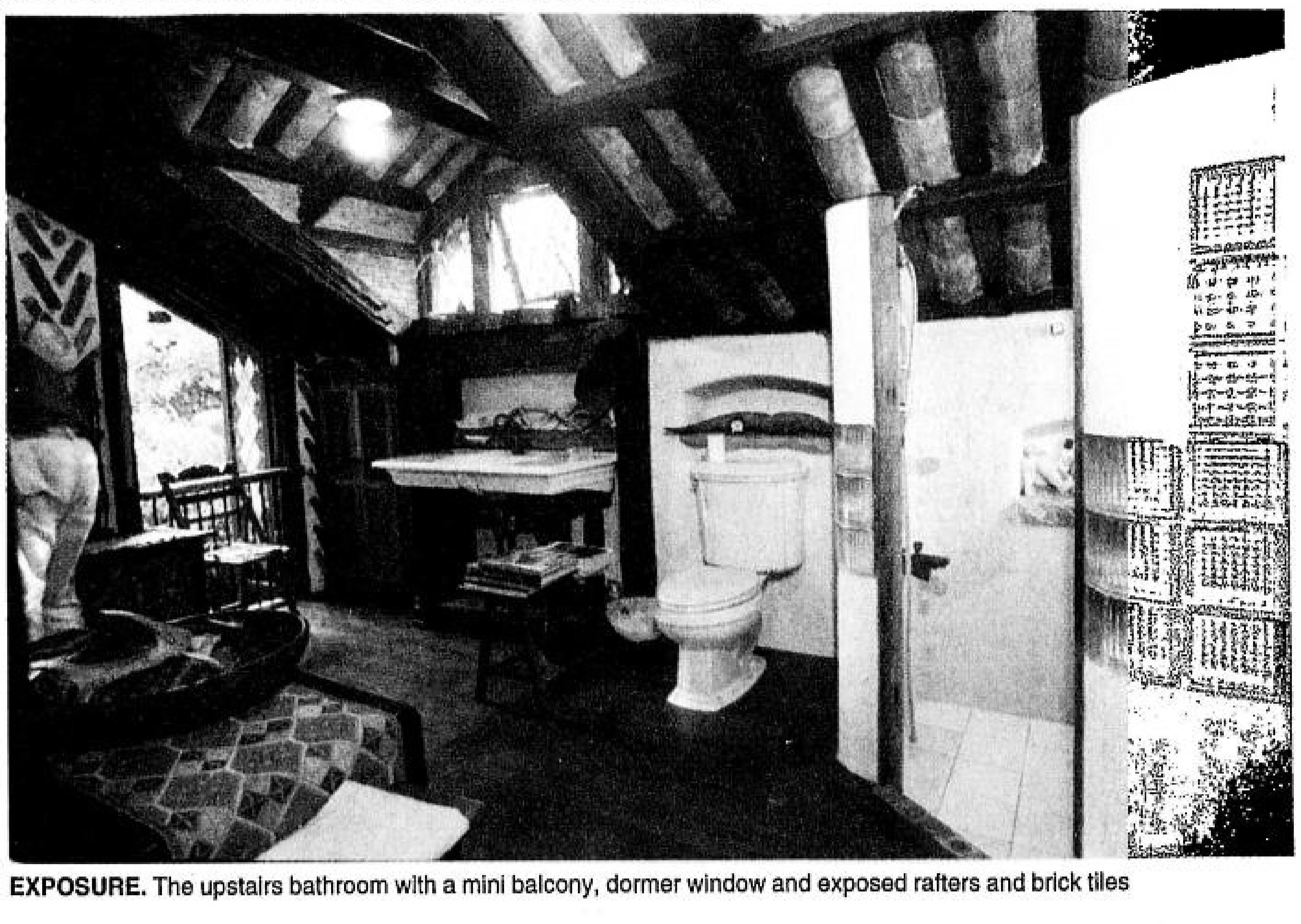
E-mail the author at avergara@inquirer.com.ph



MIX AND MATCH. The ground-floor bathroom opens to a view of a pocket garden. Burnt *jambas* frame the mirror and machuca tiles brighten up otherwise drab walls.



GRANDMA'S NOOK. Wood-fired brick oven for slow-fired dishes such as *kare-kare*



EXPOSURE. The upstairs bathroom with a mini balcony, dormer window and exposed rafters and brick tiles

RAP to hold 31st teachers' training convention

THE READING Association of the Philippines with the Philippine Normal University will hold its 31st annual convention on April 20-22, at the PNU Auditorium, Taft Avenue. Keynoting the convention on the theme "Critical Thinking for National and Global Literacy" is Dr. Soledad Reyes, writer, critic and professor of English and Filipino at the Ateneo de Manila University. Her topic is "Literature and Critical Thinking in a Multimedia Classroom." The convention features panel discussions, lecture-demo teaching and poster sessions to update the reading educator on relevant and creative reading instruction strategies in the light of developments in communications and information technologies. Call Pat Cordero, RAP president, at 823-5077 or fax 824-1832; Fidela B. Suelto, RAP secretary, at 723-0481 to -95; Dr. Angelita Romero, PNU, 527-0365.

GOINGS-ON

FREE WORKSHOPS. Dr. Mitchell M. Feraren, a values specialist, is designing and facilitating free seminar-workshops according to the specific needs of the sponsoring institution or organization. Topics are Values, Emotional Management, Effective Parenting, Human Resources Management, "Familogy" (Family Studies), Vocation and Mission of the People of God and Personal Healing. He is also conducting free Bible study, catechism session, prayer meeting, retreat and recollection by invitation. These free seminar-workshops are given nationwide and worldwide to all sponsoring institutions or organizations. Visit 2426-D, Coral St., San Andres, Manila, or call 561-4979.

STRESS MANAGEMENT SEMINAR. Brahma Kumaris Meditation Center offers Stress Management seminar tomorrow, 3-6 p.m. Call 890-7960 or visit the Center at 7484 Bagtikan corner Dao Streets, San Antonio Village, Makati City.

MUSICAL SHOW. The Enterprise Center Makati presents "Keys, Strings and Points," a musical and ballet show 6 tonight at the Upper Lobby Tower 2 of The Enterprise. Admission is free.

CARTOON WORKSHOP. Cartoonists Tonton Young, Rene Aranda and Alex Young (Prokids) hold a summer cartoon workshop for kids 5-16 years old. Sessions are ongoing until May 7 at the Museo Pambata, Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Call 727-1573 or 523-1997/98.

APO CONVENTION. The Alpha Phi Omega International Philippines Inc. will have its 21st Biennial Convention on May 25-27 at George Dewey Convention Center, Subic, Olongapo City. Call 439-7640/7603.

SEMINAR. ProActive Center for Training will hold a seminar-workshop on restaurant management on April 23-May 1, 1-5 p.m. at Triple V-Express, 2/L Bridgeway, SM Megamall. Call 823-4947.

SPECIAL OFFER. Island Spice's "Beach Crazy" weekends invade Alabang this April. For a minimum of P500, you can make your own bead bracelet at its Filinvest Festival Mall outlet on April 21-22 and April 28-29. For tattoo fans, a Henna tattoo artist will be available at its Alabang Town Center outlet on weekends. Island Spice stores are at SM Megamall, Robinsons Place Manila, Alabang Town Center and Filinvest Festival Mall.

BAZAAR. The US Embassy Club holds its 42nd semi-annual Shoppers Day Bazaar on April 28; 9 a.m.-6 p.m. at the World Trade Center. Tickets are available at the gate.

PHOTO WORKSHOP. The Parish Youth Council of the Mary Help of Christians Parish in Better Living Subdivision, Parañaque is holding a summer photography workshop this April until May. Call 776-4249 or 824-3027.

ARTS AND CRAFTS WORKSHOP. Maryridge School opens its first year of operations with a summer arts and crafts workshop starting April 23. Offered are: Basic Art (pencil and watercolor) for 7-18-year-old participants; Pottery for 10-18 years old, April 25-27, 30, May 1; and Fun Arts and Crafts for 8-16 years old, featuring lessons in T-shirt printing, decoupage, card making, stenciling, doll making, nature frame making, glass gardening, etc. Call 861-3403/04. Maryridge School is at 64 F Cruz St., Phase III, BF Homes, Parañaque, beside the Presentation of Child Jesus Church (on Aguirre Avenue).

BOOK SIGNING. Dr. Domingo G. Landicho will autograph his new poetry collection, "Putong," tomorrow, 6 p.m., at the Solidaridad Bookshop, 531 Padre Faura St., Ermita, Manila. Call 523-0870 or 525-5038.

UP CMCAA holds career talk for new grads

SEVEN alumni of the UP College of Mass Communications (UP CMC) who have made a name for themselves in various fields are the distinguished guests at the First Career Talk Day on April 21, 8:30 a.m.-12 nn at the UP CMC Auditorium, Diliman Campus.

Sponsored by the UP CMC Alumni Association, the half-day event aims to give the new CMC graduates and their parents a sneak preview into the exciting world of mass communications. The speakers will give tips on how to survive the trade, share their experiences and the challenges hurdled to make it to the top.

The speakers and topics are: SSS vice president Susie Bugante on "Opportunities and Challenges of Government Work"; Punla sa Tao Foundation president and executive director Chuki Feria-Miranda on "Social Marketing is a Career Too"; Ayala Corp. associate director for corporate affairs Danny Gozo on "Corporate Public Affairs, Anyone?"; UP Communication Research department chair Dr. Joey Lacson on "Communication Research in the New Millennium"; Pinoy Times publisher Vic Tirol on "Do you have what it takes to be a journalist?"; RPN 9 executive Dody Lacuna on "Broadcast Media Isn't for Everyone"; award-winning filmmaker Maryo J. de los Reyes on "Behind the Scenes, Before and After the Take," and Campaigns and Grey founder Yoly Villanueva-Ong on "The Dizzying but Exciting World of Advertising."

As an added attraction, a one-stop-shop action center will be set up by the Social Security System together with Pag-Ibig Fund and Philippine Health Corp. at the UP CMC lobby for these new graduates. These booths, which will be open starting 8 a.m., will accept membership applications and attend to queries as the new graduates enter the workforce. The general public may also avail of the hassle-free registration starting 10 a.m.- 12 nn.

Call 433-7895 or 920-6863.

Raffle promo gives away house-and-lot units

HERE'S your chance to win a house and lot in Robinsons' "Home Free Home," a raffle promotion from April 23 to June 24.

Every P300 single receipt from any Robinsons Mall outlet, Robinsons Department Store and Robinsons Supermarket, any one-time purchase of four Robinsons Movieworld tickets or every purchase of a Robinsons Dream Center's Dream Day ticket during the promo period will entitle shoppers to a raffle coupon.

Any of two house-and-lot units at South Square Village will be given away as grand prizes. Other prize packages include an audio/video entertainment showcase, a bedroom showcase and a kitchen showcase.

Call Bonique Vinluan, at 633-9396/7641 to -90, local 175-176.

Promo promises bright future for kids

GOOD news for parents of Anchor Milk drinkers. Here's a chance for you to build a brighter future for your child. The Anchor Milk "Brighter Futures Promo" has been extended to April 27, the closing date for all entries. The grand draw will be held on May 8. The promo is being run exclusively with the Mercury Drug Corp.

Top prizes include CAP Education Plans worth P200,000 and P100,000, which will be given away during the grand draw.

To join, gather and enclose one Anchor box top (180 g, 450 g, 250 ml), or a can tin foil (180 g, 1.3kg. 1.8 kg or 2.5 kg) and a Mercury Drug receipt of any Anchor Full Cream Milk Powder or UHT purchase. Then, write your name, address, phone number and the store of purchase on the back of the receipt, envelope, box top or tin foil. Drop boxes are situated at Mercury Drug Store outlets nationwide.

Other prizes to be raffled off include 10 one year's supply of Anchor Milk, 50 backpacks and 50 Mercury Drug gift certificates worth P1,000 each.

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• NATURAL • PROVEN
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Your skin needs more than just cleansing. To reveal your skin's freshest layer, St. Ives created Apricot Scrub. With natural fibres that act as little scrubbers, this Swiss formula Apricot Scrub gently removes impurities and dead cells, leaving your complexion smoother, with a natural glow.

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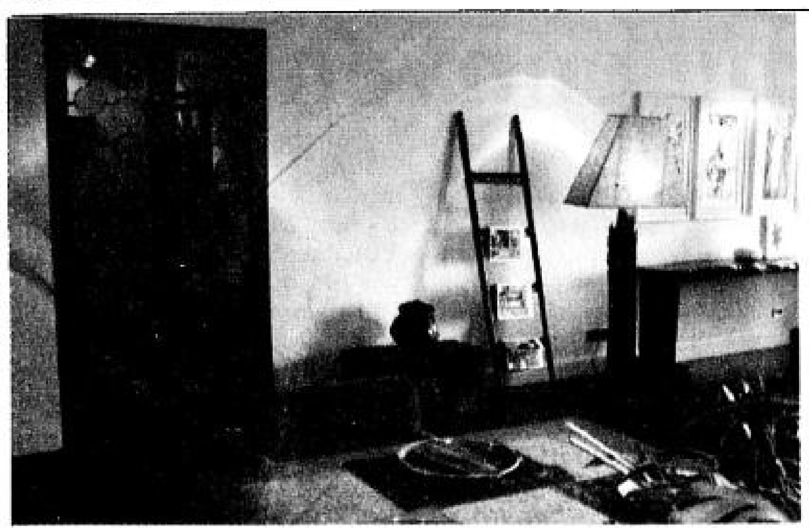
Health HB Beauty
SAVE P15
for every single item purchase of St. Ives
APRICOT SCRUB 170 ml.
Offer good from
APRIL 1 - 30
Per DTI Permit No. 0204 Series of 2000

Health HB Beauty
SAVE P20
for every single item purchase of St. Ives
FACIAL CLEANSER 170 ml.
Offer good from
APRIL 1 - 30
Per DTI Permit No. 0204 Series of 2000

Health HB Beauty
SAVE P20
for every single item purchase of St. Ives
HYDROXY MASQUE 170 ml.
Offer good from
APRIL 1 - 30
Per DTI Permit No. 0204 Series of 2000

SM City Annex • SM Centerpoint • SM Mega A • SM Southmall • SM City Fairview • SM City Bacoor • SM City Manila • SM City Iloilo • SM City Cebu • SM City Pampanga • Festival Supermall • All SM Department Stores.



THE DOOR to the bedrooms is done in circles of bold colors, in contrast to the earthy browns of the wooden chest, *palayok* or native clay pot, stylized Ifugao ladder, the gnarled wooden base of a floor lamp and the thick, almost untamed wood of the console table.

THE DINING table for eight has a masculinely decorative edge set off by a painting featuring no, not the usual Last Supper or a composition of native fruits, but the entrance to an old Filipino home and its chracteristic capiz windows.

THE MASTER bedroom in somber olive green, the perfect background for the cool blues and greens of a Sansó above the headboard and a couple of clay jars as table lamp bases

Where Santa Fe, Vigan, modernism and local artists find a home

By Avie Gochoco-Perez
Photos by Chito Vecina
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

UNIT 10C of Essensa, Lawton Tower, is atypical of interior designer Teng Bustos only in the sense that it doesn't carry her customary old bricks. But 10C is typical of her style in its carved wooden curtain valances reminiscent of whimsical punched edges of tin roofs of Vigan, its dark-stained wooden floors (did she or didn't she replace the original Belgian maple wood floors of the unit?), its chrysanthemum flowers carved into the legs of wooden plant containers, and the somber mood of its bedrooms, owing to their—how should one put it—provocatively dark, mysterious colors.

The foyer presents a statement both somber and whimsical, consisting of a low dark-stained table that looks like an Ifugao *papag* and several indigenous decorative materials that say "welcome" the chicly native way. An Ang Kiukok on the wall makes the boldest statement in the arrangement.

The doors leading to the living room and the hallway to the bedrooms are Teng's ultra-modern statement in this otherwise comfy, down-home setting. The doors are made up of metal circles, painted in primary colors.

The powder room is an echo of the same room in the Essensa model unit which interior designer Joszi Meskan dressed up. The powder room walls are also handpainted with vines and leaves but in 10C, the handpainting also appears in discreet corners of the bedrooms. These bedrooms are typical Teng, painted in dark olive and even *ube* whilst Meskan goes for the more neutral beige or cream.

A GROUPING of four black-and-white lithographs by artist Fil Delacruz sets off a starkly linear furniture arrangement in the living room where, perhaps, the owner's love of the sea is reflected in a collection of shells on the coffee table.

THE MUTED painting of Ang Kiukok dominates the eclectic arrangement of an old *papag* or low wooden table, a living plant, a modern lamp and a carved wooden console at the foyer.

10C has Teng's Santa Fe-style interiors in its roughly hewn wooden-based lamps, console tables, chests and even a stylized Ifugao ladder used as a magazine rack. Angelica B. Jamlang did the handpainting on the walls, down to the white lilies on a stand-alone cupboard in the kitchen.

Paintings by local artists dominate the living area, blowing spots of color on the walls. Yes, this unit is typical modern Filipino, down to the household help, of which there are two.

As we left the unit, one of the two was vigorously treading the floor, the pieces of rag under her feet polishing it to a sheen as she did so.

PEF spares no efforts in conserving Philippine eagle

SEEING GREEN

Doris Gaskell Nuyda

THE PHILIPPINE eagle is described as the most regal, magnificent, the tallest and perhaps the biggest eagle in the world. It is said to have the longest wingspan among eagles anywhere. Its back and wings are grayish brown, the front of its neck and belly are whitish, and its head is streaked with gray-brown feathers which stand erect, forming a crest.

It is also one, if not the rarest and most endangered, raptor known. Scientists consider it a raptor because studies show that the Philippine eagle and other modern birds evolved from dinosaurs. "Except for the reduced tailbone and lack of teeth," we are informed, "the skeletal structure of the Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) reveals a similarity more to the velociraptor of 'Jurassic Park' fame, than to other vertebrates, alive or extinct..."

Magnificent as it is, the Philippine eagle, found nowhere else but in this country, is an endangered bird. It was in the late 1960s that naturalist Dr. Dioscoro Rabor discovered that the eagle population had decreased to less than 100 individuals, all because of the wanton destruction of our forests and the uncontrolled hunt for eagles.

Since that time, more studies were made on the Philippine eagle, and eventually, the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) was organized, dedicated to the cause of conserving the national bird.

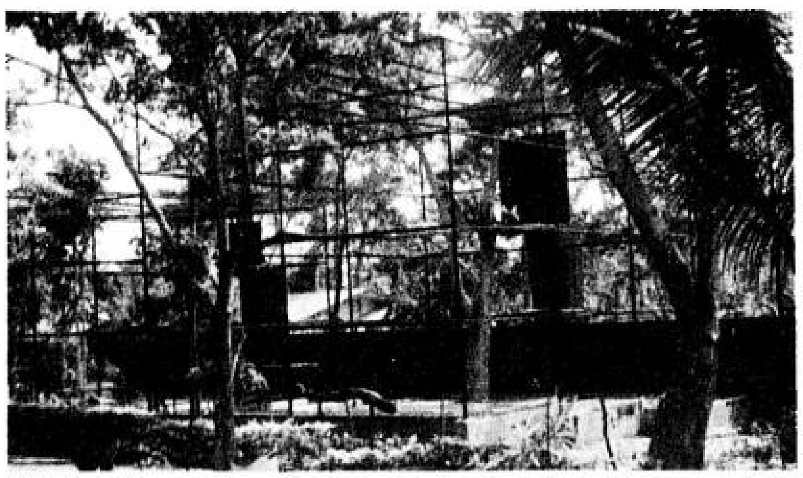
The Foundation set up a center in Davao which is kept going by members' contributions, both corporate and individual, and by grants from international and local sources. The PEF is a private undertaking, managed by a group fast gaining a reputation for dogged determination to see Philippine eagles increase and multiply, sparing no efforts to make this come true.

PEF executive director Dennis Salvador, an agricultural economist from both UP Los Baños and the Ateneo de Davao University, is connected with several international conservation and research organizations, including the Asian Raptor Research and Conservation Network in which he is the only Filipino member. In recognition of his work in these fields, he was recipient of last year's The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) award for wildlife conservation.

DENNIS Salvador with a Philippine hawk-eagle, a rare and threatened bird found only in the Philippines

He also deserves credit for his efforts to have a presidential proclamation declare the Philippine eagle as the national bird.

Once a government agency under the DENR, the PEF was privatized in 1987. Salvador was already with the Foundation at the time as eagle food stock specialist. Although government funds were no longer coming in, his small staff was determined to continue their work even without salaries (most of them, said Salvador, were able to get by, thanks to the assistance of their extended families).



HUGE enclosures like this are designed to provide ample room and the best home for the eagles.

When people of Davao saw this sacrifice, they came to the rescue and offered donations and contributions. One good thing leads to another, and eventually help began to come from different sources.

The Idaho-based Peregrine Fund, for example, got the PEF in touch with the MacArthur Foundation, which gave the PEF a three-year grant, and this got the ball rolling, says Salvador. It was also during this time that they were able to start work with the communities in the uplands of Mindanao. Thus began the PEF's thrust of undertaking forest conservation together with eagle conservation. Without the forests, the eagles lose their habitats, he says, and that is a sure way to lose them forever.

He mentions the long breeding period of eagles, and the length of time for female eagles to lay eggs. Eagles are said to be faithful mates. Once they have paired, they stay with each other, so the possibility of the female mating with another male is practically zero. This fidelity is pointed out as a desirable trait for Filipinos to emulate, even as it slows down the eagles' breeding rate.

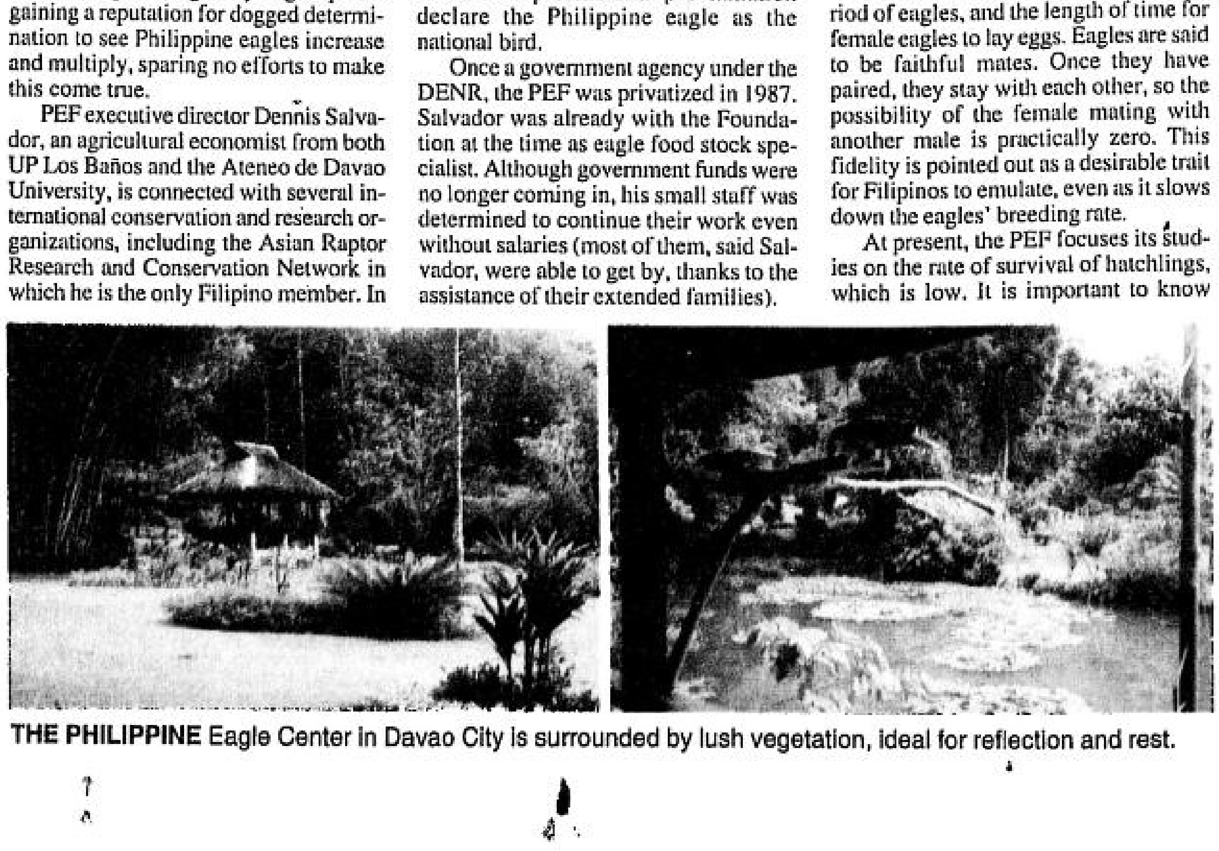
At present, the PEF focuses its studies on the rate of survival of hatchlings, which is low. It is important to know what happens to young eagles after they leave their nests. A state-of-the-art monitoring device called radio telemetry, attached to the birds, gives staffers this and other significant information. To assure population growth, the staff uses cryogenic equipment (donated by Caltex) which stores eagle sperm. This was used recently to inseminate two female eagles. Artificial insemination of frozen sperm is used whenever natural breeding is not possible.

There are about 400-500 eagles all over the Philippines, sited mostly in Mindanao. It is still an endangered number, says Salvador, not even half the conservation goal.

To assure forest habitats and wildlife are in safe-keeping, the PEF helps community people by providing the impetus for their participation: it assists them in their means of livelihood; in acquiring credit; gives them access to basic services; provides tools and seeds, and markets their produce. These are done on the principle that conservation can be attained only if it brings social and economic improvement to people of marginal income communities, and if people can share the forest with the eagles.

The center is also being made into a learning facility for the children. In return, the community is asked to care for the forest and the wildlife in it. When a project has ended, proceeds are given to the people so they can start all over, on their own this time, and be assured of a continuous income.

The cause of saving the Philippine eagle has spread out not only to the business sector but also to individuals who have expressed their desire to participate in conservation efforts by using their particular talents. Among these concerned individuals are JR Chong and his mother, Grace, who have collaborated to come out with a book on the eagle, "Fly, Malaya, Fly!" More on this next week.



THE PHILIPPINE Eagle Center in Davao City is surrounded by lush vegetation, ideal for reflection and rest.

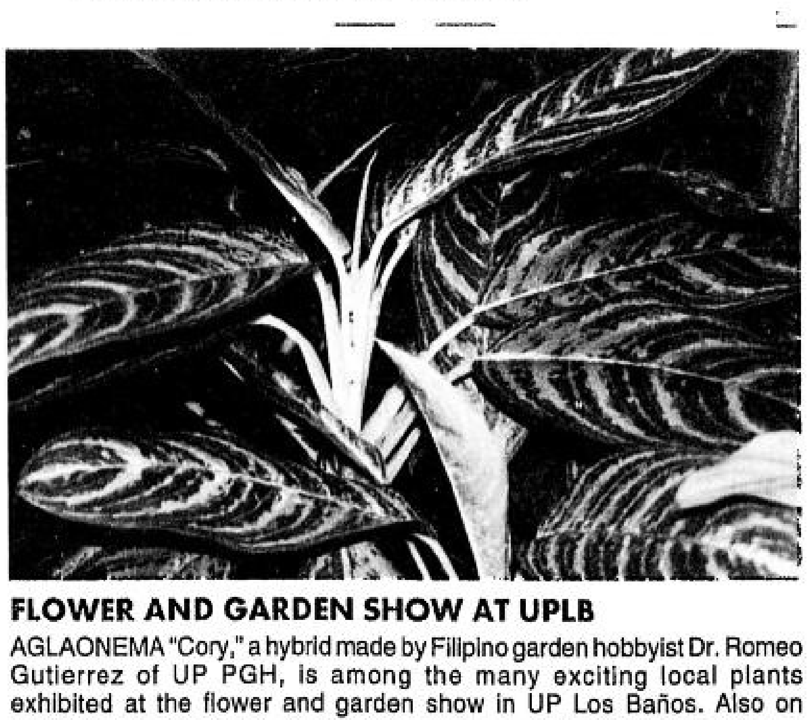
Seminar on propagating ornamentals set

MUSSAENDA, one of the valued plants native to the Philippines, can be reproduced commercially. This particular hybrid, with bright red and yellow blossoms, has been named Doña Eva Macapagal.

Market demand for ornamental plants has increased tremendously with the rising number of residential areas, hotels and other business establishments. Each grown plant can yield some 20-50 cuttings which, in turn, can sell from P150-200 each.

Dr. Simeona Siar of UPLB's Institute of Plant Breeding will discuss and demonstrate the techniques of culturing and propagating ornamentals in a seminar titled "Commercial Production of High-Value Potted (Flowering and Foliage) Plants" on April 26-27, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m., at the Technology and Livelihood Resource Center. Hands-on sessions will be conducted on site.

Visit the TLRC telemarketing office at Unit 712, 7/F CityState Centre Building, 709 Shaw Boulevard, Pasig City, or call 633-5709/5810/6728.



FLOWER AND GARDEN SHOW AT UPLB

AGLAONEMA "Cory," a hybrid made by Filipino garden hobbyist Dr. Romeo Gutierrez of UP PGH, is among the many exciting local plants exhibited at the flower and garden show in UP Los Baños. Also on exhibit are wild native plants with good potentials for the ornamental plant industry. The show will run until April 29 at the senior social

Unlikely couplings

BY JOSE JAVIER REYES

REGARDLESS of how much we profess or foist our Christian beliefs and practices, malice seems to be second nature for human beings. We may desperately try to control and suppress the compulsion to bitch. Some succeed by silently reciting the Act of Contrition each time they feel the urge.

But others temporarily forget the laws of karma and the order of the Cosmos and indulge in delicious dirty thoughts, transforming bitching into a true art form of verbal abuse and demented imagination.

Distinctly Pinoy

The opportunities that trigger off ugly yet amusing thoughts are abundant. Filipinos do not have exclusive right to think venomously of their fellow men and women. However, the lack of subtleties in our language, the unpredictable twists and turns of our minds and, most especially, our passion for gossip have created a genre of cattiness quite distinct from the rest of the world. We can turn bitterness into reason, jealousy and envy into argument and acidity into charm.

Nothing seems more likely to push the buttons in our acid-marinated minds to jump into perverse theories and hasty conclusions than the sight of unlikely couples. Point of clarification: an unlikely couple is any combination of positive and negative forces, pulled together not by laws of physics but by some unspoken order that does not require but usually elicits some form of explanation. That makes the situation seem scientific… ergo, academic. Put bluntly, however, an unlikely couple is a surprising combination of gorgeous hunk/beauty-deprived woman, luscious chick/appalling male, fresh, young stud/aging matron, vestal virgin/D.O.M. Get it?

The combinations can go on and on like a row of cages in a zoo. Aging homosexual/buffed Adonis, in-midlife-crisis tycoon/squeaky bimbo, bejeweled matron/seemingly macho dance instructor, and heir-apparent/*talipapa* partner.

Unlikely couples do not and cannot include more predictable permutations like married male celebrity/over-enthusiastic starlet, big boss/ambitious subordinate, male talent manager/male or female talent. These partnerships have reached the level of the boring, ceasing to be of interest in gossip circles, whether in posh restaurants or bars, and even society columns. Unlikely couples make good blind items although the fact that they are considered "unlikely" means blindness has got nothing to do with their public status. The notoriety of their bonding was born out of visibility.

How to spot the unlikely

The categories for judging "unlikely couples" have been whittled down to three: disparity in ages, differences in social and economic standing and wastage of the potentials of a genetic pool.

The categories are not rigidly exclusive: age differences tend to point to disparity in sizes of bank accounts or lists of assets and liabilities. Often, the overlapping becomes evident thereby generating more wagging of tongues and provoking far dirtier thoughts. A greasy, rich old man cavorting with a fragrant, poor, gorgeous young girl automatically elicits a number of hypotheses that do not include, uh, true love, intelligent companionship or even destiny fulfilling itself.

But the sight of older man or woman with sweet young thing is no longer a joke of natural selection since this has happened as early as the time of the land bridges. There is nothing phenomenal in seeing a beautiful creature of the universe sashaying beside someone who has been around since the Paleolithic period. The scandal meter still moves but barely causes a jolt unless the antiquated one starts dressing and behaving in a style designed to keep up with his/her/its young partner.

New category

It is almost pathetic to see a man or woman old enough to have children who are parents themselves learning to dance to trance or techno music. The bobbing of the head, the angular jerks of appendages or even the ability to last through a song without suffering a cardiac arrest is a sight one can do without.

The sight of anyone past the age of 50 wearing clothes from Defect or People are People brings a new dimension to the term "fashion victim." It raises the idea of setting up a completely new category called "fashion mutants."

To see someone old enough to be a father/mother in a rave party or one of the bars in Libis, Pasig with a sweet young thing in tow generates two reactions. It is either he/she is paying the bills that night or he/she is a very strict parent wanting to make sure that his/her kid does not drink too much alcohol, stays away from prohibited drugs while keeping his/her virtue intact.

Most embarrassing is when someone—either mean or tactless—asks: "*Sino yan? Anak mo?*" or points out that the younger half of the couple makes the other one look like his/her progenitor/ancestor. Reactions usually range from the very embarrassed *he-he-he* to a more vehement response that may include serving a fist sandwich straight into the mouth of the curious.

Usually, in these May-December love teams, the forgone conclusion is that money or other possible forms of tangible goods and material wealth is the reason love bloomed. For what other humanly acceptable reason might there be why someone young and beautiful would settle for a partner who is old and shriveled? To think dirty is instinctive. No one would even remotely consider that the couple might have a real good thing going between them. For all we know, in their most private and intimate moments, they are discussing the supply of plutonium in our planet and its implications on the Nuclear Arms Agreement. They might also be discussing the implications on Catholicism of the three volumes of "Conversations with God." Or, if we want to be a bit more realistic—*malay natin*—they could be discussing Renaissance polyphony in the latest albums of the Backstreet Boys and Jennifer Lopez.

Why does it always have to be money? They must talk some time! It is hard to imagine that all their conversations are limited to *pengi* this, *pengi* that or grunts of passion followed by a quick dose of asthma spray from an inhaler.

More unforgiving

The reaction to the younger of the pair could be kinder or more unforgiving. He/she is branded as someone mating for economic improvement or to improve his/her pedigree. But accusing someone of gold digging just because he or she is with an apparently older and richer partner is so provincial if not archaic.

The proverbial *nakahuli ng malaking isda* sounds so developmental.

Besides, there is a disturbing image that flashes through the mind. All these eager yet vulnerable senior citizens of privilege swimming around seem like a school of *plaplas* waiting to be caught by the evil net of young money-starved, status-crazy fishing folks. It sounds like an R-rated and more interesting version of "Muro-Ami."

Of course, there will always be other explanations why someone so young finds true love in another quite so old. Call in Oedipus and Electra. The kinder theory is that the younger person is looking for a "parent figure." It is as if having two parents is not enough you have to find a third to baby you.. and will hopefully give you babies as well.

The only problem is the older partner might have already reached that terminal stage of being post-menopausal. Well, one can always surrender the prospect of having a "fruit of love" or enjoying the simple joys of handling Pampers. A little cuddling on the lap matched by a little smooching sweetened by travel, a fully furnished condo, a paid-for car and other material perks can certainly make up for no longer being able to have a Junior.

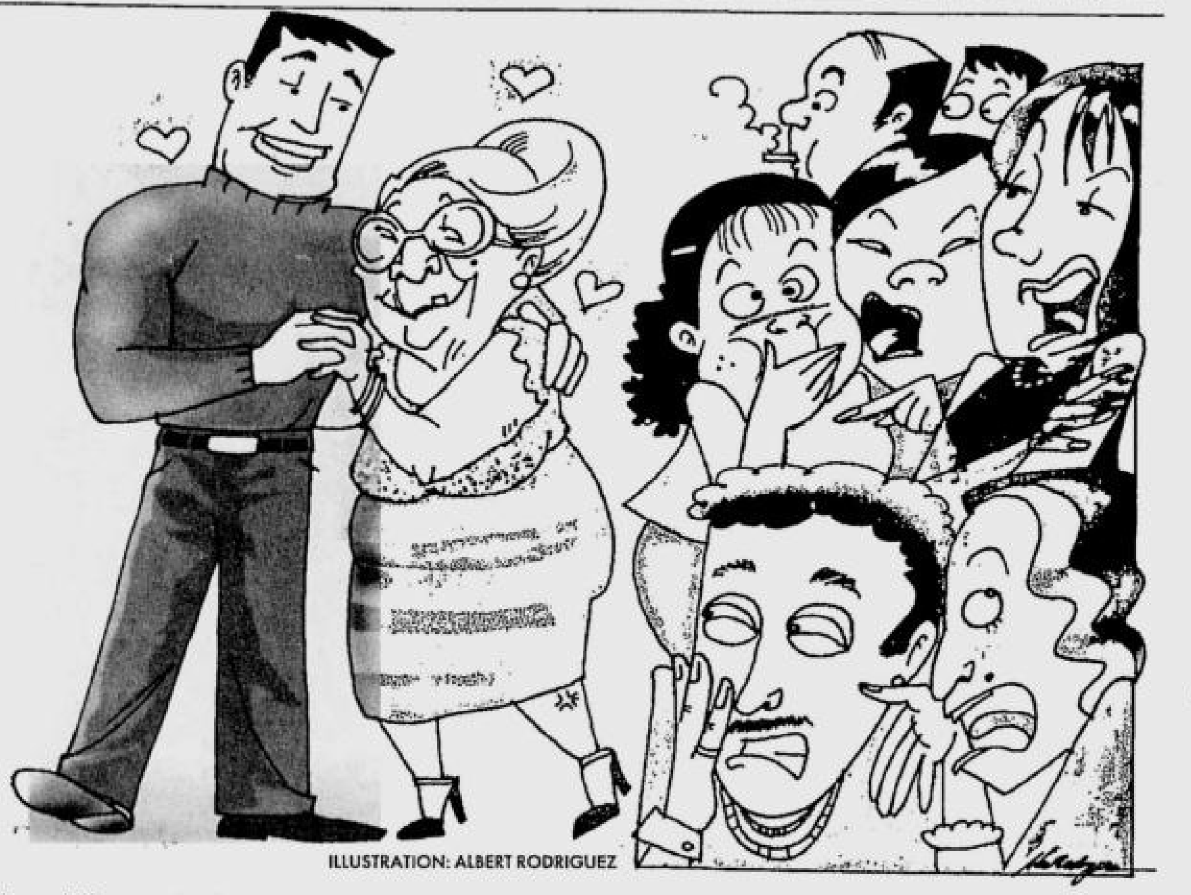


ILLUSTRATION: ALBERT RODRIGUEZ

Looks count

Horrible as it may sound, the looks department also plays an important role in identifying unlikely couples. Remember that beauty is only skin-deep. It is the skin that is exposed to the public and not the superlatively designed pancreas. Inner beauty might be more important but since you cannot see internal magnificence in hotel lobbies, bars, airports, shopping malls, exclusive boutiques and the streets of Malate, people still get judged by their epidermis.

The reaction to a beautiful girl with an aesthetically challenged partner is as strong seeing a gorgeous hunk holding hands with a female whose face is unsalvageable by the magic of makeup or Dr. Danny David. This sort of coupling usually elicits more sighs of disgust and laments about the course of the universe and the future of the Filipino race.

> The reaction to a beautiful girl with an aesthetically challenged partner is as strong seeing a gorgeous hunk holding hands with a female whose face is unsalvageable by the magic of makeup or Dr. Danny David

There is a feeling of regret for wastage—of time, energy and the possibilities of improving the beauty of our proud brown genus. This is accompanied by expressions of frustration, desperation and a general fear of the impending Apocalypse.

People can be so unforgiving when they see a Homo Sapien so gorgeous smooching with someone who looks like the living proof of the Darwinian theory of evolution. After an ear-shattering "*Bah-ket?!*" heard from Baclaran to Fairview, profuse sobbing and questions about Divine Justice usually follow. Theories are flung across the room: perhaps the better-looking partner is suffering from incurable glaucoma thereby distorting his or her vision. Maybe the beautiful one is actually intellectually challenged... you know, one of those special children, not the kind in Promil ads but those who join Special Olympics or photographed with touring beauty queens.

Or, if the jealousy venom is that potent, one can always resort to the theory of economics. As long as you have the right family name, fortune and social standing, even if you look like a papaya squashed by a berserk elephant, you have prime market value. Ahhh. *Kuwarta lang yan.* It is *pera o bayong* at work. How can someone so beautiful love a *mapera* creature if the only time he/she/it can look beautiful is when his/her/its face is covered with a *bayong*?

If not money, then what?

But what defies logic is when money is not the issue. This demands another deafening, "*Bahket?!*" Lines like, "*Kahit pangit...baka naman mabait.*" Gimme a break! A pet Chihuahua is also *mabait* but no one will dare venture into a shameless public display of affection, hold paws and smooch with that cute little doggy. "*Baka naman* smart." If someone so gorgeous wants something smart, then the person should go to PowerBooks or Page One and buy a tome. That seems more fulfilling, more mentally nutritious and less dangerous. Books provide information, provoke analysis and do not cause pregnancies.

Maybe the eclectic union is a form of rebellion. Just how much of one's beauty can a person really take? Is it possible that he/she who is physically blessed makes a deliberate effort to look for someone so trivialized if not vandalized by the universe in order to prove a point? For all we know, the mission may even be messianic. This could be nature at work, repairing errors through drastic mixtures that will eventually lead to a perfect-looking generation. If this is not nature unconsciously guiding us, have we ever considered that this might be the handiwork of guardian angels?

Then there is the possibility that unlikely couples come into being because of very natural causes.

Some people prefer someone much older because vintage minds carry more wisdom and experience. Date a guy struggling to find himself (if not employment) and all you will get are intense conversations about the PBA or MBA, his dream car, his post-pubescent dilemmas about his parents, sibling rivalry and stupid anecdotes about members of his peer group whom you do not know. Amid this menu of mind-numbing themes are numerous attempts to use the neon-colored condom in his wallet. Date a girl who is bubbly and fresh and you spend half the time listening to her twitter, discussing the love problems of her friends whom you couldn't care less about, exploring the musicality of her favorite boy bands, and watching her sending text messages to about 20 percent of all cell users in this planet. She will assure you that she is a professional virgin whose earthy activities are limited to oral sex.

At least with an older person, you have greater chances of getting quality conversation... and enjoy definitely better food.

More trouble than they're worth

Now if you are good-looking and you go out with someone who looks as good if not better than you, then you automatically face certain setbacks. Date a gorgeous guy and, unless he is one of the Chosen Few who is a surefire candidate for the Rapture, he will likely spend half the time flirting with hopefully the opposite sex. You may even find someone who would also be flaunting his machismo at any functioning fairy within breathing distance. Date a renowned girl of the moment and she'd make sure you know that she *is* the favorite of the millisecond. Aside from her constant preoccupation about how she looks in public even while sneezing, she will make sure that you appreciate how lucky you are to be her escort at this point of her egocentric history.

Someone once said that it was really so much safer and peaceful to bond with the less fortunate in looks. Aside from the fact that the law of supply and demand will work in your favor, the beauty-deprived tend to feel *oh-so-grateful* to be in the company of the Blessed Beings. Sure, beautiful boy/girl may end up being a "trophy something" being paraded in public to prove that yes, there is a God! But so what? It is out of sheer thankfulness that the better-looking person will be treated much better, given more attention. He/she is also likely to be assured of his/her mate's of fidelity.

Finally, we can resort to that overused and most abused statement: Love conquers all.

This theory has become almost a part of our collective subconscious, making some of us believe that the adrenaline shot brought about by the feeling of being loved and needed is enough to make us endure anything and everything... including Edsa III. Since scientists have successfully reduced the entire sensation of love to chemical reactions in human bodies, we can strip away all these romantic illusions and pretenses to say that you can get the same sort of high by overdosing on chocolates.

But let us give the theory a chance. Unlikely couples may yet prove that indeed love conquers all. To paraphrase Forrest Gump: Life is a box of Godivas.

Setting the mood for Mediterranean

THE BARNYARD Lifestyle Store features home furniture and accessories made of pinewood, wrought iron and original Italian tiles.

Products range from wrought iron accessories to beautiful living, dining and bedroom pieces. It also carries a wide variety of items such as terra-cotta pots, wicker products and even scented candles.

The beauty of the southern European region, which includes the Mediterranean, inspired the store—its culture, architecture, design, mood and ambiance. Casual elegance is the way of life in this region, without clearly defining frontiers that reflect a Mediterranean abundance and passion for life.

The concept depicts interiors that cater to all walks of life. The kinds of home they cater to are from that of a Duchess, all the way to a country farmer. The Barnyard can furnish even a gaily painted weekend cottage, a classic country home, and a colorful gypsy caravan, all the way to a minimalistic modernized monastery.

"Mapa-panga-nga ka sa sarap!"

"Aaaaahhh!" Namnamin ang lutong Ilonggo Grill. Mamangha sa lasa ng pinapangarap na panga, kansi, kadios, inihaw na hito, seafood inasal, malasugi, crablets, inihaw na pusit, rellenong bangus, Bacolod ixpress, pansit molo at siyempre pa oooohhh….ang blockbuster na Batchoy! Ang lahat nang ito, dagdag pang sabaw at sarsa at init at amoy…naku po! Kaya tikman ninyo lahat, araw-arawin dapat. Kaon na sa Ilonggo Grill!

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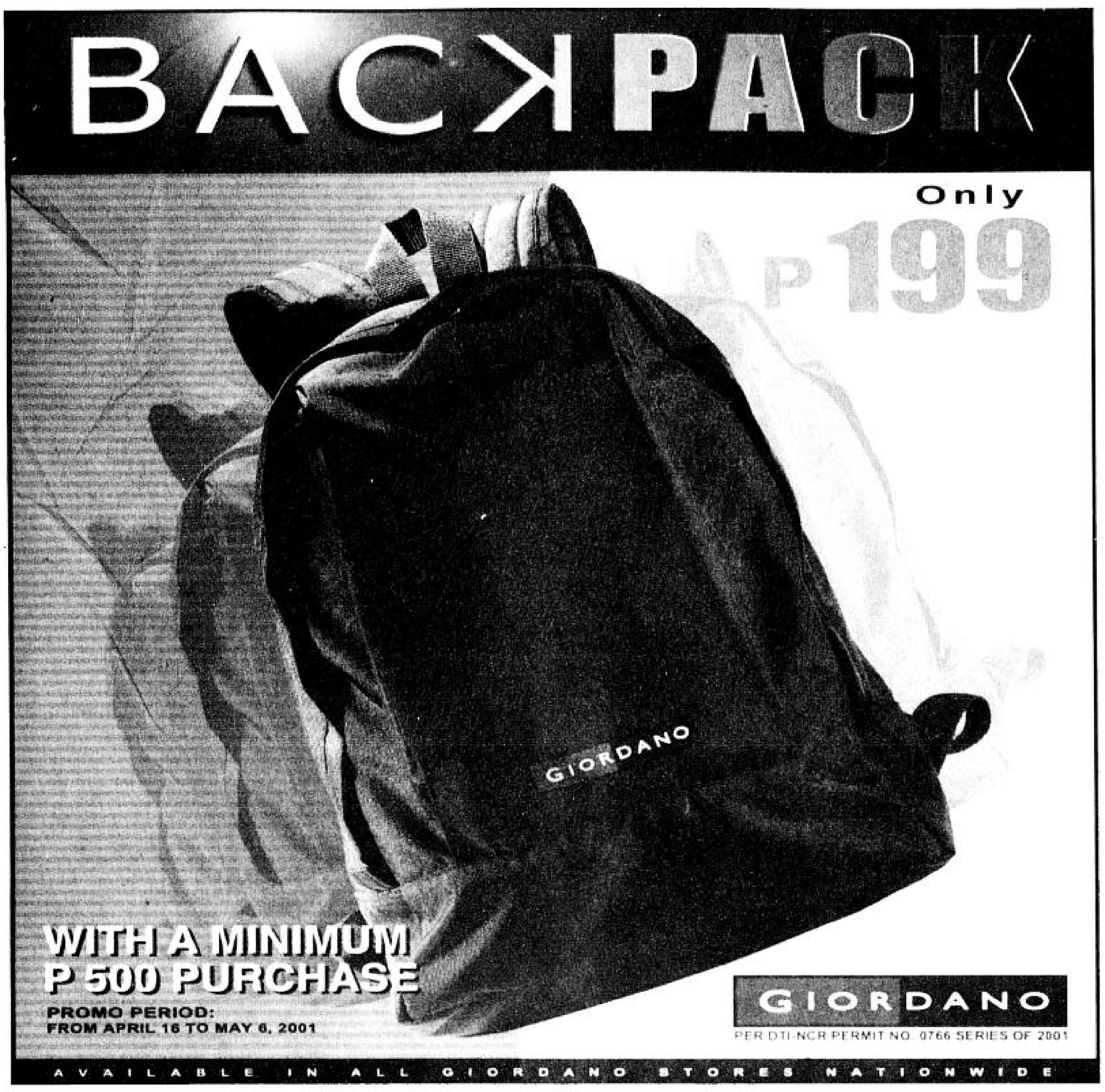
Araw-Araw
ILONGGO GRILL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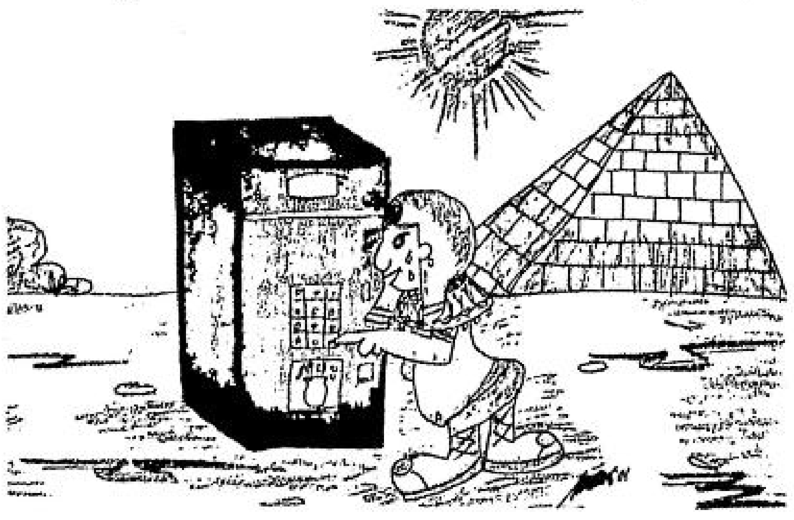

Vending through the ages

"IF you look at the machines around us today, you will see that the trend is toward automation. And the reason is really very simple. Everyone appreciates and wants quick, reliable and convenient service. The worldwide vending industry is built on this premise," says Herwin See, chief operating officer of Philippine Vending Corp., one of the pioneers in the local vending business.

Hardly anyone debates this worthwhile purpose. After all, figures show that vending convenience is widely available and patronized in the US, Europe and Japan.

In these major markets, the vending machine is not considered a novelty but a necessity. This is what has led experts to predict that someday in the near future, a vendo dispenser is going to be part of every office, factory and community.

Every year, some 5.2 million vending machines in the US pump out products such as hot and cold drinks, confectionery and snacks, dairy products and cigarettes. Europe's 3.2 million machines are mostly freestanding and tabletop beverage dispensers ever present in both public and private establishments.

Though vending has yet to catch fire throughout most of Asia and the Pacific, Japan has proven it is the gadget king of the region with almost 4.5 million machines as of last count. It is indeed rather ironic that vending did not quite catch up as well in China when historical records show that an enterprising Chinese inventor came with a coin-operated pencil dispenser as early as 1076 A.D.

"Progress is constantly driving the pace of life to higher and higher speeds. Asia catches up with the western world in terms of growth. We will see a worldwide phenomenon wherein the vending machine will be as pervasive, as ubiquitous as a computer or a fax machine. Every office will need a vending machine," concludes See.

Overall, major leaps in the vending industry have come few and far between. Coin-driven tobacco boxes found their way into English taverns in the 1700s; Tutti-Frutti chewing gum machines appeared on a train platform in 1888; cigarette, cold drinks, hot coffee and sandwich machines were introduced in the US only in the 1920s to the '50s.

"Perhaps one of the biggest leaps in the vending industry was when they started putting in electronic computer chip into the machines back in 1980. From then on, everything just took off," recalls See.

And take off it did. With dispensers that were intelligent enough to take in even large denomination bills and give out change, vending machines became ever present in commercial, residential and industrial establishments especially in the US.

Over the past decade, progress in local area and wide area networks as well as wireless data transmission have allowed flawless, round-the-clock monitoring of vending machines. The vending machines of the future will regularly report stock levels and warn operators when to refill which products.

From all indications, this global industry shows no signs of slowing down. These days, the simple convenience of a cold drink, a hot treat, or a filling meal threatens to become even more elusive. This is the void that the vending industry fills for anyone and everyone who can spare some loose change.

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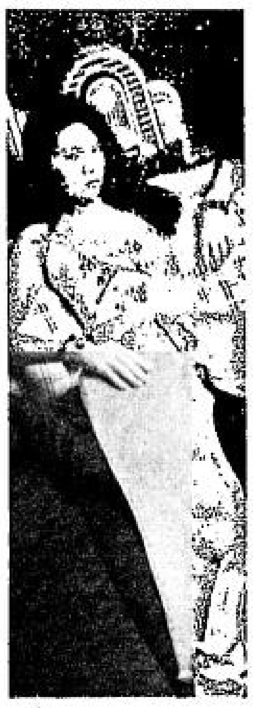
LIFESTYLE

Trend Spotting

Bohemian keeps company with Bourgeois

Story on page E2



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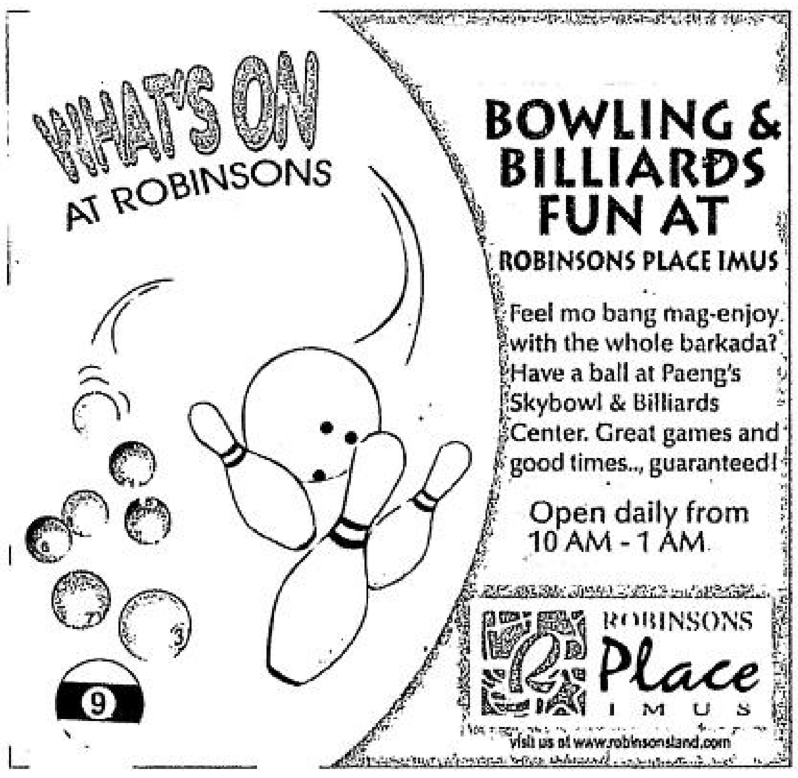

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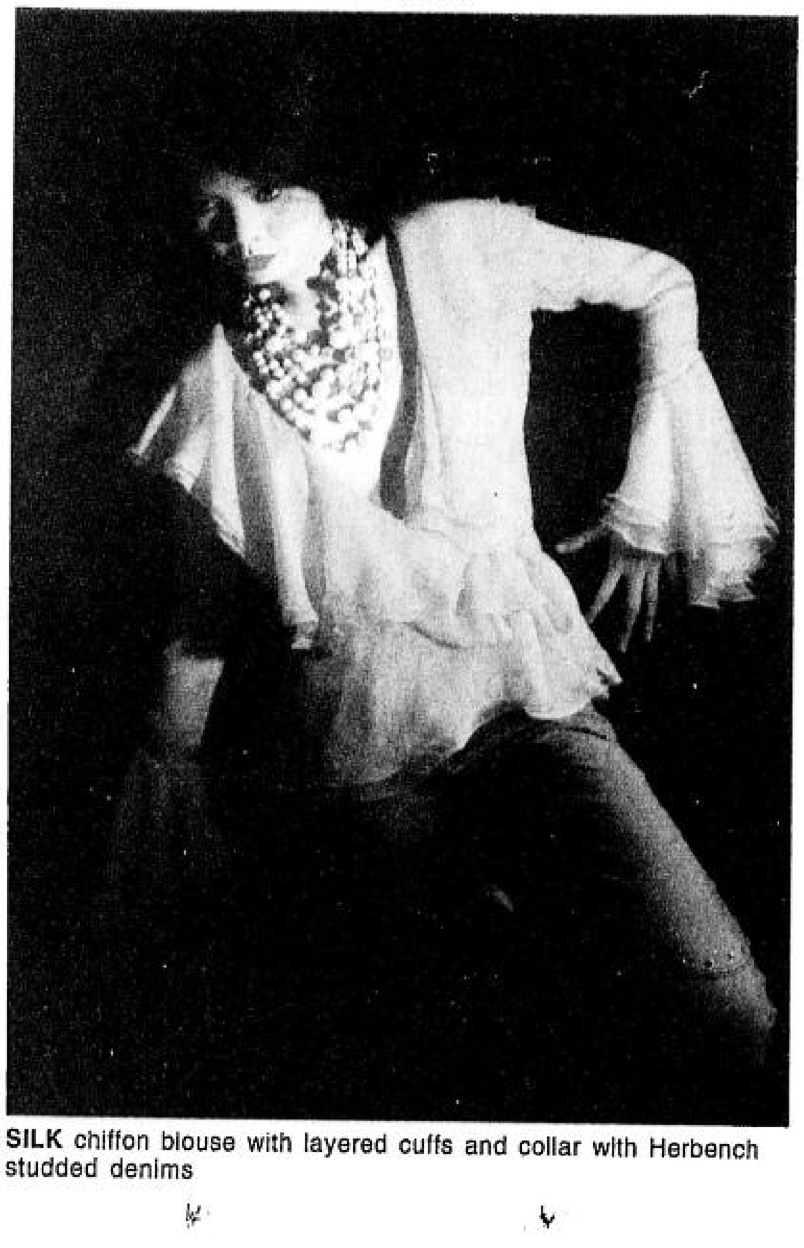
STRETCH velvet blouse encrusted with Swarovski crystals, Osmeña pearls and costume jewelry by Joe Salazar

THE BLOUSE can go with the Herbench studded jeans.

BOURGEOIS Bohemian: Jewelry-encrusted top worn under Herbench jacket and skirt

TAFFETA silk organza blouse, the shoulder twisted into a rosette, goes with the Herbench jeans.



SILK chiffon blouse with layered cuffs and collar with Herbench studded denims

HAIR AND MAKEUP BY PATRICK ROSAS
AND RUBEN
MAKEUP BY YSL
MODEL: BAMBA BIGLANG-AWA
FROM CAL CARRIE
SHOES BY LILA ALMARIO

Bohemian keeps company with Bourgeois

PHOTOS BY RAYMOND LAUCHENGCO

UP until the '80s, style belonged to the elite. Designers and prestige brands dictated what was stylish.

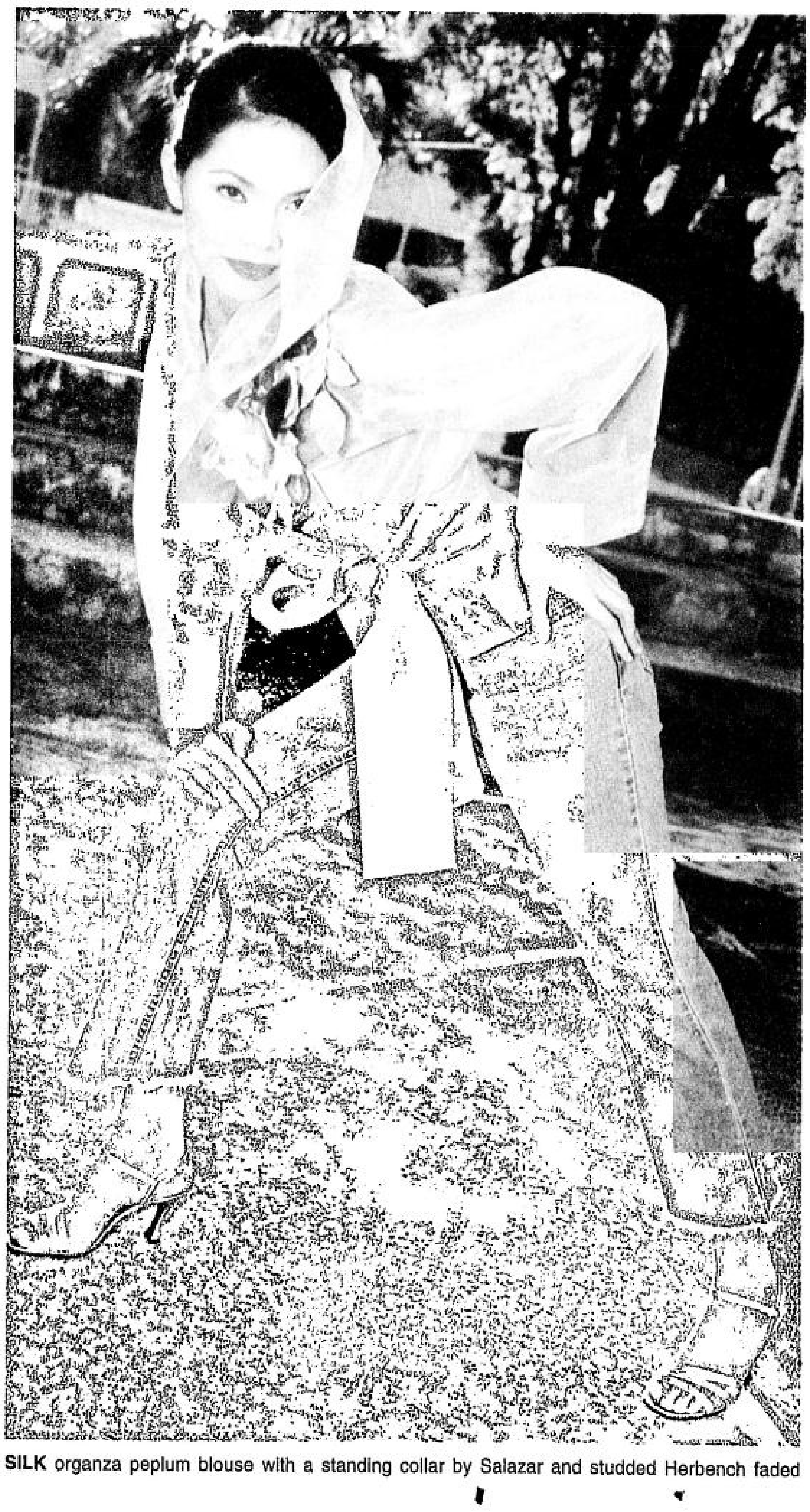
Times have changed. Style is moving away from elitism as class, age, gender and culture barriers break down. Personal style decrees what is acceptable. In fact, anything goes as long as it is comfortable, high quality and fun.

It all began a decade ago when Karl Lagerfeld started mixing the Chanel jacket with faded jeans. Sharon Stone made Oscar fashion history by wearing a Gap T-shirt with a Vera Wang skirt. New York's young breed of elite also combined an inexpensive T-shirt with a Bill Blass ballgown skirt.

This is the era of informality. An uncontrived put-together look is chic. Taking fashion too seriously isn't. It's the attitude of the times: be yourself and excel.

For this pictorial, we've mixed the Bohemian with the Bourgeois—Herbench and Joe Salazar's luxurious made-to-measure tops.

Naysayers were aghast when they heard about this concept. Why should a designer mix with a local ready-to-wear label? As the chic would say, with matching upturned noses: Why not?



SILK organza peplum blouse with a standing collar by Salazar and studded Herbench faded

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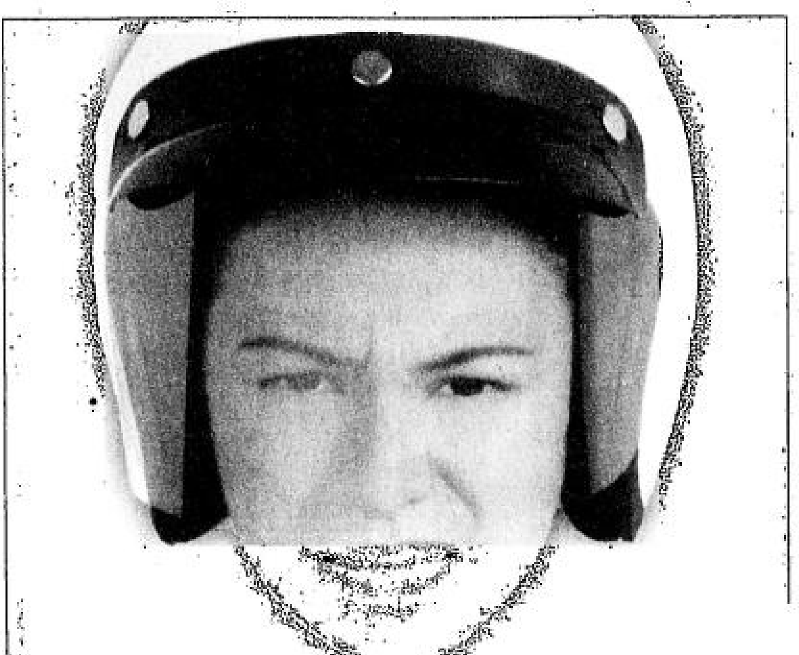

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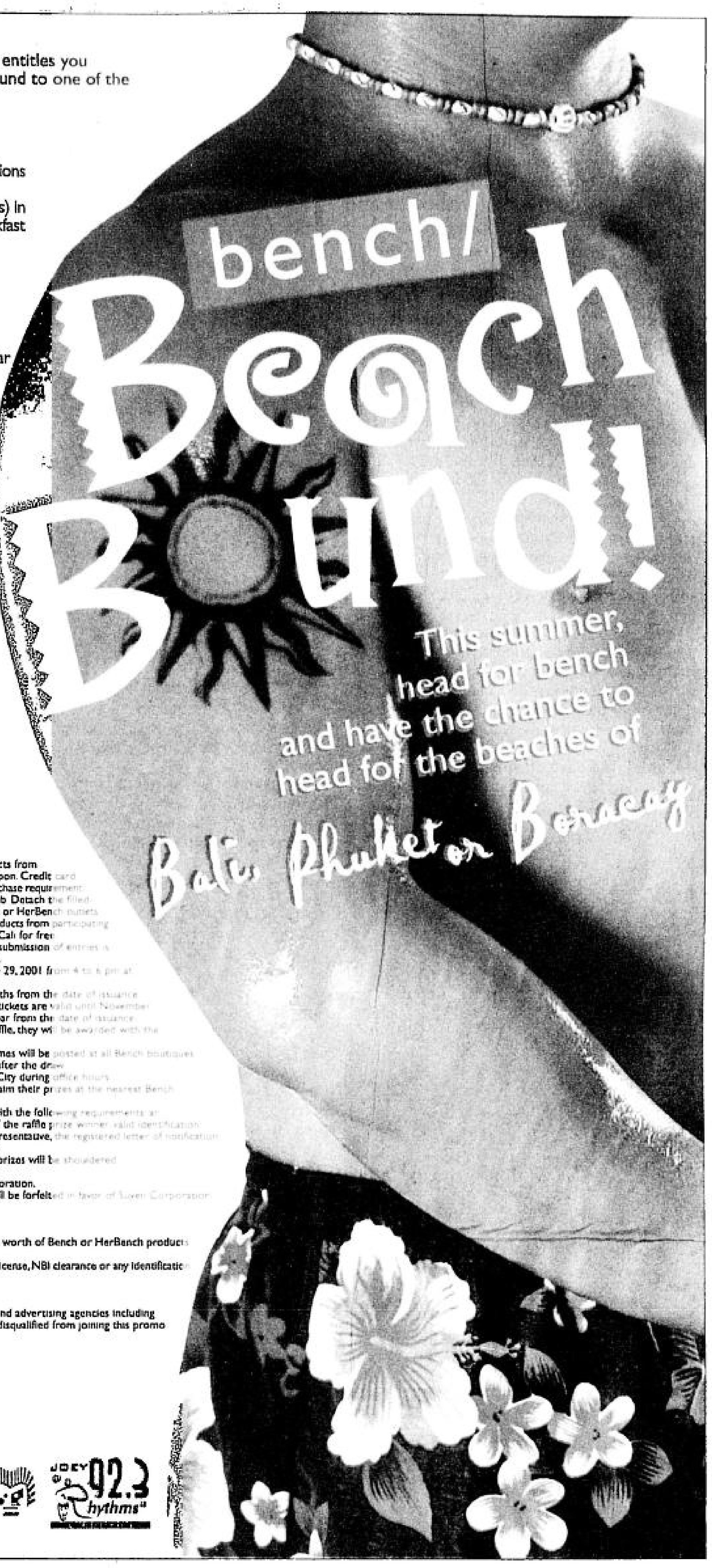
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- For a minimum single purchase of P500.00 worth of Bench/Herbench products from participating Bench/HerBench outlets also entitles the customer to receive one (1) Cali for free.
- Promo begins March 21, 2001 and ends on June 15, 2001. Deadline for submission of entries is on June 15, 2001 at store closing hours of Bench and Herbench outlets.
- Winners will be drawn by representatives from Bench and DTI on June 29, 2001 from 4 to 6 pm at Suyen Corporation located at 2214 Tolentino St., Pasay City.
- Foreign trip prizes are convertible to cash and are valid for six (6) months from the date of issuance. Local trip prize is transferable but not convertible to cash. Local plane tickets are valid until November 30, 2001 while the accommodations are valid for a period of one (1) year from the date of issuance.
- Winners can only win once and if drawn more than once during the raffle, they will be awarded with the prize with higher value.
- Winners will be notified by registered mail and telephone, and their names will be posted at all Bench boutiques. All winners will be published in a leading newspaper within (2) weeks after the draw.
- Prizes may be claimed at Suyen Corporation, 2214 Tolentino St., Pasay City during office hours (8:30 am to 7:00 pm) from Monday to Friday. Provincial winners may claim their prizes at the nearest Bench boutique upon presentation of valid identification.
- Winners can claim their prizes through an authorized representative with the following requirements: an authorization letter from the raffle prize winner, a valid identification of the raffle prize winner, valid identification (any identification with photograph and signature) of the authorized representative, the registered letter of notification and the winning raffle stub.
- All travel documents and taxes that may arise from the use of the trip prizes will be shouldered by the raffle prize winner.
- 20% tax for prize exceeding P10,000.00 will be paid for by Suyen Corporation.
- Prizes not claimed within sixty (60) days from receipt of notification will be forfeited in favor of Suyen Corporation with prior approval from DTI.

DISQUALIFICATION:
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- Misrepresenting the name, address and signature.
- Incomplete information on the entry stub.
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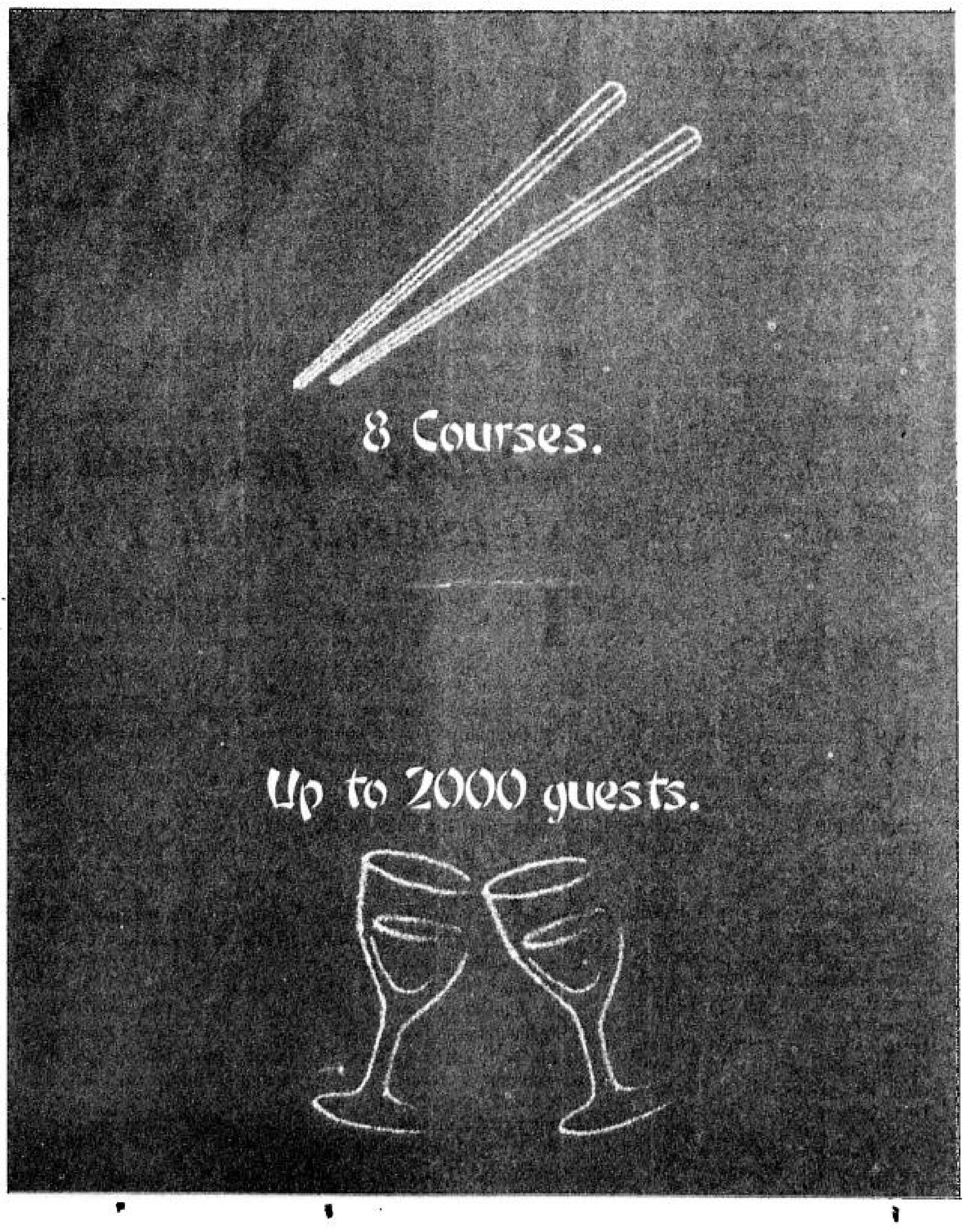
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Bathing with things you eat

By Marge C. Enriquez
Photos by Chito Vecina
PICTORIAL DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

CALL it the sign of the times. In the Nanosecond Nineties and the Zombie Zeros, the market for products addressing well-being and natural beauty is booming. There's a flood of handcrafted and botanical soaps in the market that leaves the Filipino consumer confused. How do you know if the soap, touted as natural, is good for you?

Kit Zobel and her partner Kelly de la Merced have been advocating the use of handcrafted soap. It's not only because they've set up a kiosk named Fresh! Body and Bath Market in Glorietta 1, which sells products made by their aunt Nelia Silverio Dee. It's the only Filipino company affiliated with the Soap Handcrafters Guild in the States.

These entrepreneurs declare, "Life is short. Use good soap." Bathing is a way of calming down—if you use soaps with aromatherapeutic properties. It's a private time for you to destress and to pamper yourself after a stressful day.

Dee has been working overtime even if she doesn't need to. Aside from coming from a well-to-do family, she's known in Manila's elite circle for gourmet cooking and catering. Since she indulges in the sensory experiences of the kitchen, she took her skills a step further by cooking soap.

Her philosophy is that if the ingredients are good enough to eat and nourishing to the body's internal organs, why not use the coffee, cream, brown sugar, spices and even *malunggay* to make soap?

A chemist taught her how to make handcrafted soap. She started giving it to friends who got hooked on her formula. Soon she started getting bulk orders. Customers waxed ecstatic about the soap's rich lather and aroma and the benefits such as smoother skin and less sensitivity.

Handcrafted soap keeps all the glycerin to nurture the skin. Commercial soapmakers remove the glycerin, which they sell as a byproduct. Without glycerin, the soap will make your skin dry or itchy. This explains why you need to apply a moisturizer after bathing. Ironically, the glycerin is used in body lotions. Glycerin pulls the moisture out of the air and leaves it on the skin.

Most commercial soaps contain synthetic detergents. For instance, the lye in soap is also used in liquid drain cleaners! They also have fragrance oils that are made in laboratories.

Dee favors the cold process in preparing her soaps. This means that no external heat is utilized during the soapmaking process other than what's needed to melt the solid oils. There's only naturally produced heat derived from a chemical reaction when an acid and base blend. This process, called saponification, preserves all the qualities of the botanical ingredients.

Since handcrafted soap is all-natural and eschews hardeners, allergic reactions are rare. Mothers have been raving about how their children stopped having skin asthma when they used Fresh! Bath and Body products.

Handcrafted soap lasts long if it's kept in a soap dish or soap wrap. These soaps are best used within six months of purchase if you want to get fragrance and freshness.

Fresh! is in for some stiff competition in the market. But Dee is confident about her product. Her soaps take a long time to make to maintain the high quality. They are poured into molds and insulated for hours. The skin can differentiate artificial soap from the real McCoy just by rubbing it on the skin and smelling the essential oil.

The fun part of the business is the marketing side. Fresh! has several lines to address different needs. The names and the ingredients are amusing. They even look good enough to eat.

From the layered soap line, Fresh! has got Choco Mint made from cocoa butter and cooling mint, and Itch a Relief, which has peppermint, lavender and chamomile to soothe irritated skin.

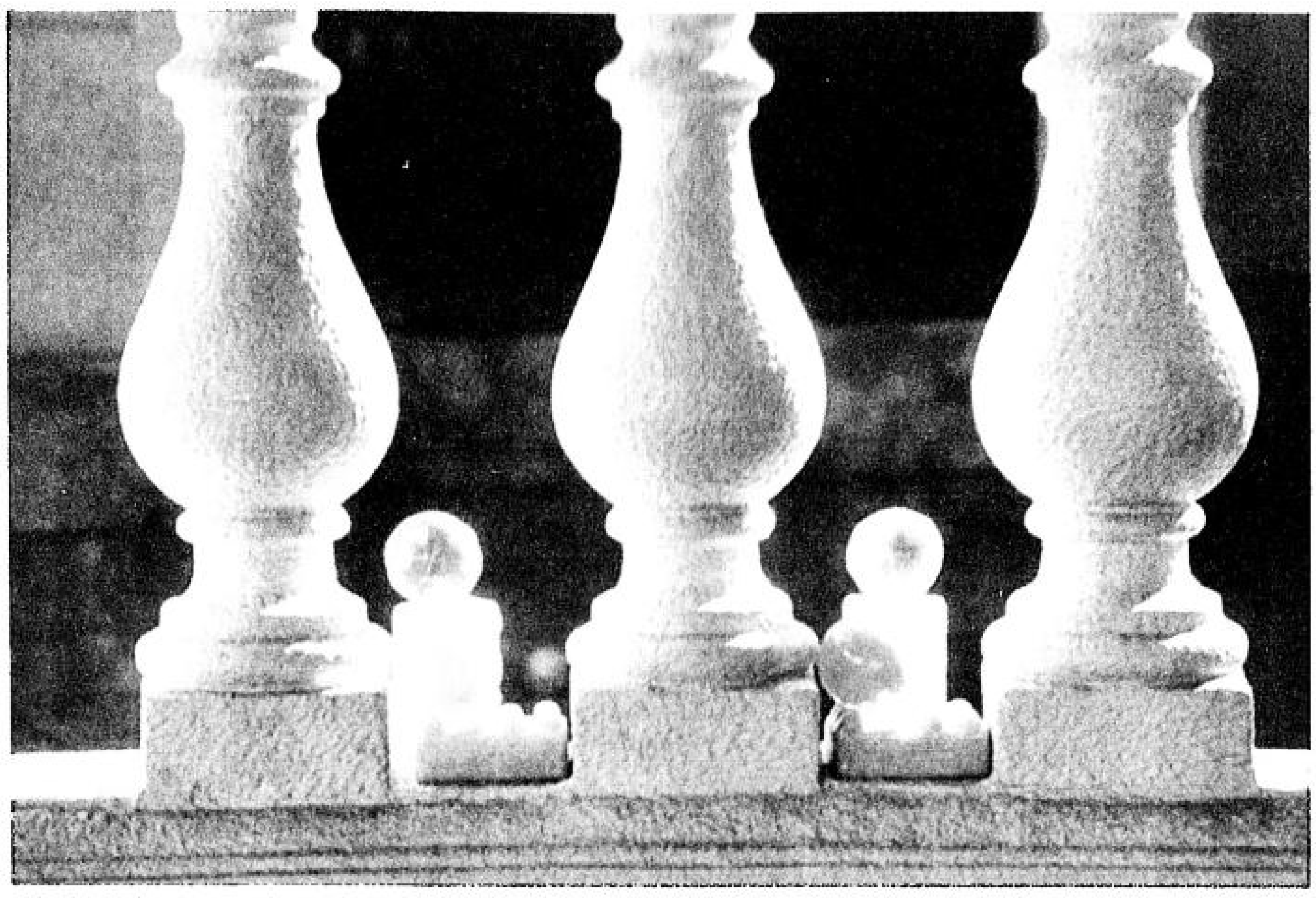
There's a milk line that contains lactic acid. The soaps are made from full-cream milk, ground almonds and honey and a combination of milk and oats for an exfoliant.

One of their top sellers is the triple treat, a trio of soaps. There's a morning perker-upper, a noontime soap to help you focus and a relaxing nighttime blend for sleeping.

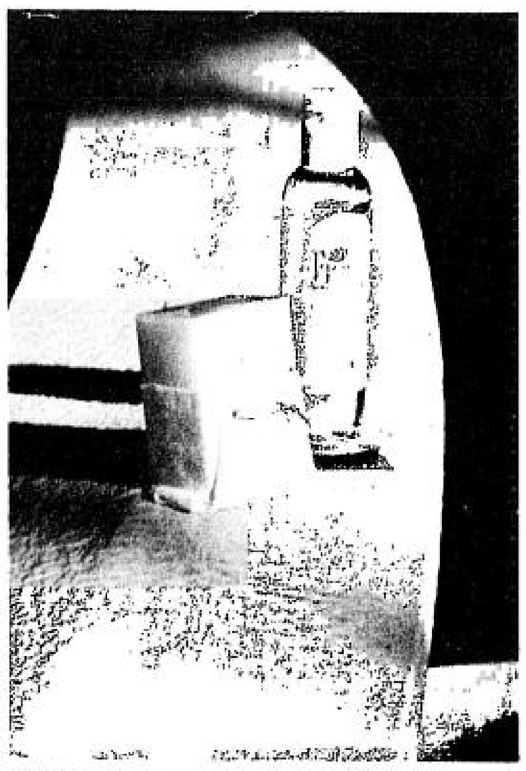
Zobel and De la Merced claim that these soaps are addictive. The soap scrubs are bars that have grains and seeds for exfoliating. There are massage oils and soaps that complement each other. They're all meant to revive your tired body and soul. There's a kiddie soap with calendula that's infused with bubblegum.

Customers have fun with soap balls that are made from edible ingredients like carrot, mandarin and apple.

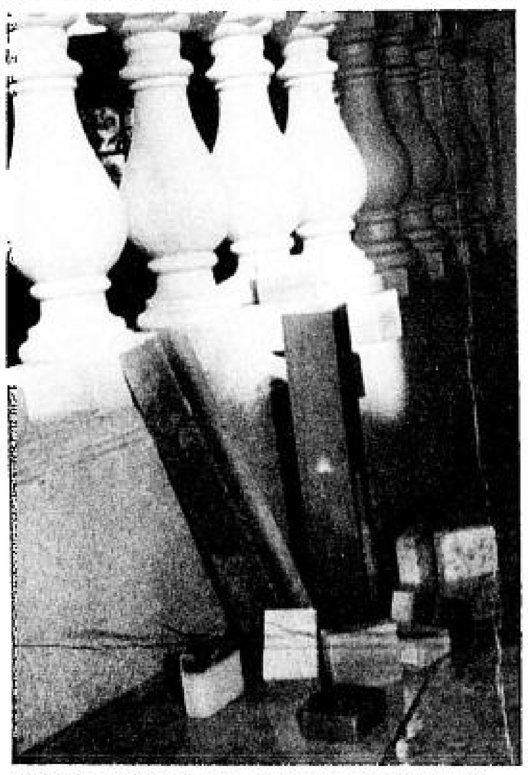
Fresh! turns the routine of bathing into a ritual.


MASSAGE bars made of grapefruit, wild rose, jasmine and sandalwood, and soapballs made of carrot, *sampaguita*, cranberry and green apple

LOCATION: PENINSULA MANILA'S UPPER LOBBY


BABY line and massage oil

NELIA Silverio Dee (center) with her nieces Kit Zobel and Kelly de la Merced in a family enterprise


BARS, layered soaps, men's soap and buff scrubs

DE la Merced slices the soap bar at the Fresh! kiosk.

FRESH! IS LOCATED AT GLORIETTA 1, AYALA CENTER. CALL 815-455 OR E-MAIL SOAP@PWORLD.NET.PH

Woman's beauty unmasked

Photo by
Raymond Lauchengco

FILIPINOS' love for drama and excess is reflected in fashion shoots. Designers want their models to wear strong makeup and piled-up hair, much to the chagrin of foreign photographers who are used to the natural look.

When makeup artist Patrick Rosas entered the fashion scene eight years ago, he had just taken a course with Masa Otake, the guru of Shiseido cosmetics. From the master, he learned the fine points of beautifying a woman. Otake mastered the art of using makeup to enhance—not mask—a woman's face. From him, Rosas learned the "no makeup makeup." While other makeup artists tended to overpower the woman, Rosas created a soft finish.

One socialite client said he was even better than a European makeup master because Rosas was able to disguise her wrinkles. Indeed, when you see faces done by foreign artists, you'll only notice the concealers and foundations. Trust the Filipino hand to transform a simple woman into a ravishing creature.

As most local designers still favor the dramatic makeup, Rosas adjusts to their requests without any qualms. When it comes to shoots with makeup sponsors, he respects the look promoted by the brand.

For this shoot, Rosas remains true to Tom Ford's vision of the YSL woman—independent-minded, sophisticated and sexy. The 2001 YSL woman stepped out in a palette stripped of superfluous color.

YSL'S Interpretation Spring Look 2001 is available at Rustan's Makati, Shangri-La Plaza and Alabang Town Center

THE YSL WOMAN. She wears a monochromatic palette accented with a provocative lipstick. Patrick Rosas used Camaieu, the dual-purpose eye and cheek color in Brown Fusion. The lighter shade highlights the inner corner of the eyes while the darker shade is applied on the crease for definition. The lipstick is Marbled Fuchsia.

MODEL: BAMBA BIGLANG-AWA

Make a personal statement with YSL

DALIA Guerrero wears the YSL Touche Eclat or Radiant Touch highlighter to give her skin a lift.

OLIVIA Richard wears the latest YSL look: subtle eye and cheek colors and lips provocatively painted in pink.

THE LOOK of the Yves Saint Laurent woman embodies confidence. Color is reduced to its essence. Each product allows the woman to make personal statements of style. Strength comes in subtle variations of tone. It makes beauty a matter of interpretation—each woman applying the color as sheer or as intensely as she likes.

The Camaieu is an all-in-one cheek and eye color that can be used in various degrees of intensities on the cheeks and eyelids to create various effects. It comes in pink and brown palettes. The lightweight texture comes from ultra-fine talcs and silica microgranules. It glides onto the skin, transparently coloring the eyes and cheeks, and making any shading effect possible.

For the face, lightly skim the cheeks, forehead and chin. To achieve great cheekbones, smile and apply comma-shaped lines of color to the upper parts of the cheeks and blend.

Camaieu can be applied as powder or watercolor on the eyes.

Radiant Touch or Touche Eclat is an innovative highlighter. It is a pen with a brush applicator to brighten the skin. Press the pen and the color appears, revealing a magical beam of light. It only comes in one shade that suits all skin tones.

The revolutionary formula contains a light-reflecting regulator, luminocaptide complex, combined with a moisturizing agent called humectine to create a light texture.

PHOTOS BY WAHOO GUERRERO
MAKEUP BY TITO DE LA FUENTE

Christian Dior's psychology of colors

STEPHANIE Kienle

JESSICA Kienle

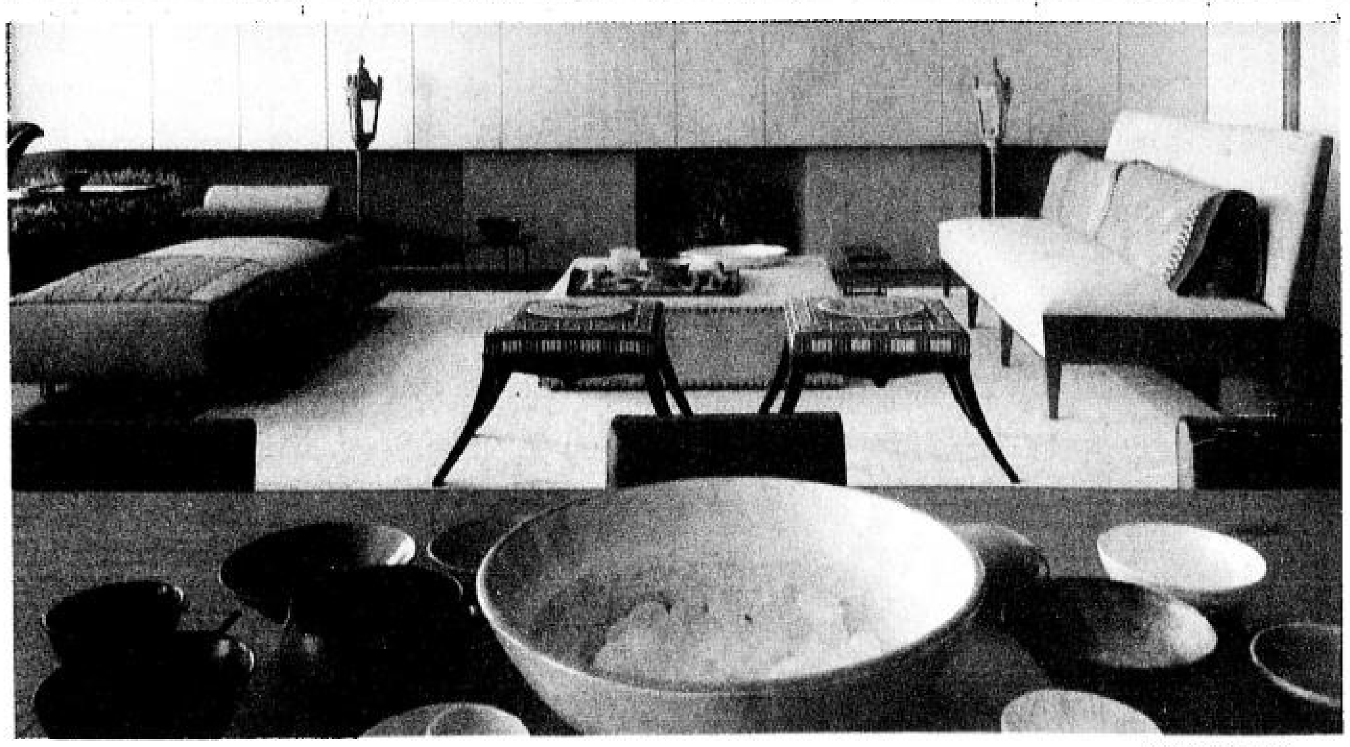
ZELDA Aragon-Kienle

MAKEUP gives character and the cosmetics we use bring out one's distinct personality. This is Christian Dior's take on its newest cosmetic collection as the fashion house infuses distinct personalities to Impressions Couture, its spring colors.

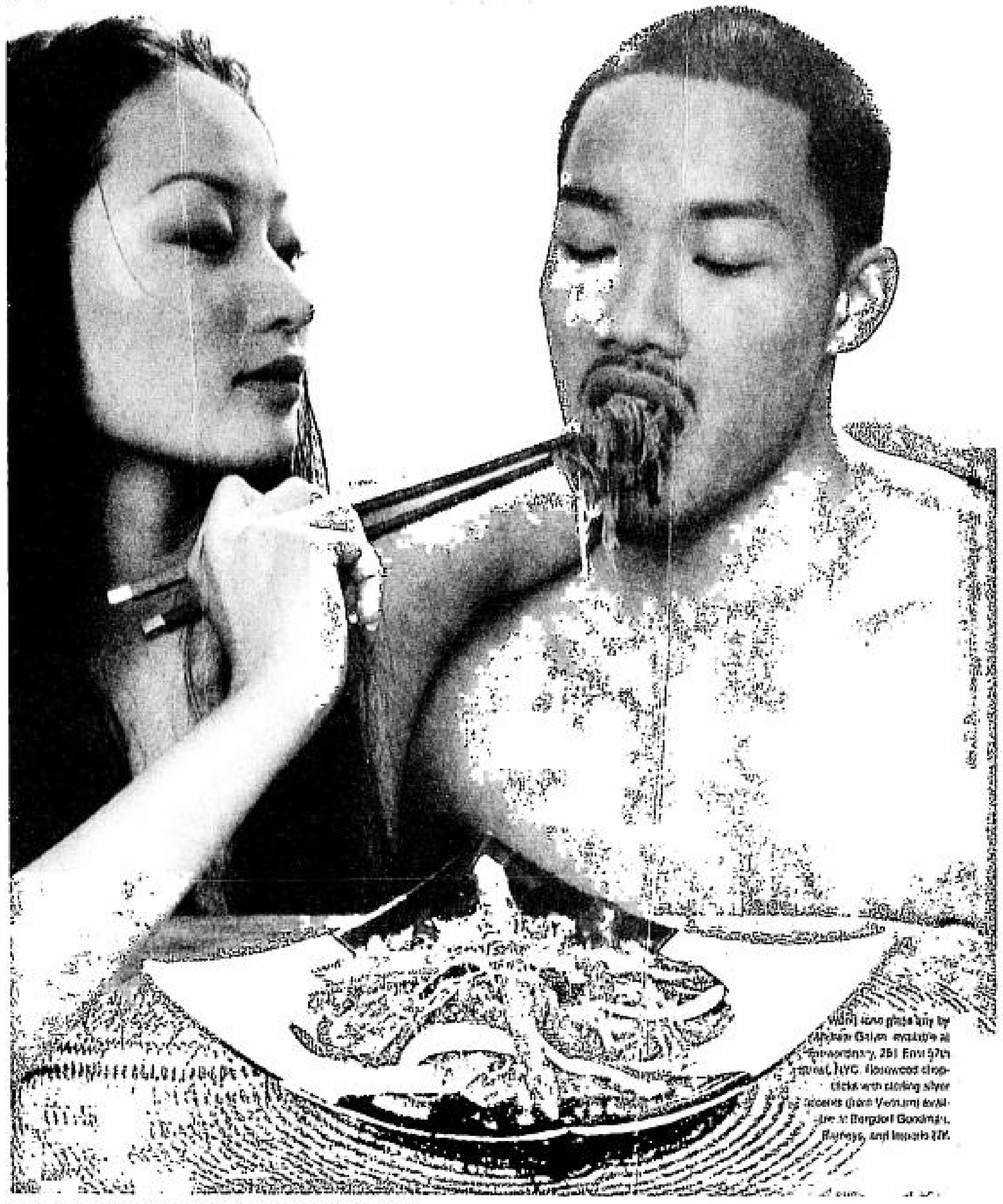
The new line is about fashion and femininity with playful colors dubbed Logomania, Flowermania and Patchworkmania. Logomania offers shades of blue, white, metallic gray and pink. Flowermania is spiced up with fuchsia, saffron, bronze and gold. Patchworkmania mixes brown corals and pastels. Available exclusively at Rustan's Department Store.

PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
MAKEUP BY PETER URBI

penshoppe
HOT LINES for SUMMER



EAST meets West in a New York apartment.



INTERESTING styling for a noodle story

In his

Element
ASIAN EYE
ASIAN ON 7TH
WOMEN ON THE VERGE

New York-based Fil-Am editor Angelo Ragaza is all set to launch an Asian lifestyle magazine this fall

By Harriet Ann Dy

TORONTO—Real style may be color blind but mainstream fashion and beauty magazines like Vogue and Harper's Bazaar do not seem to devote enough pages to the Asian and Asian-American sense of style.

"They couldn't address another side of us: our unique physical features, our upbringing and values, our experience and outlook at the threshold of two dynamic cultures," says Filipino-American magazine publisher and editor Angelo Ragaza.

All that is about to change with the launch of Element magazine (tagline: "The Magazine of Asian Style") this fall. A brainchild of Ragaza, the magazine will try to fill an untapped market in the publishing industry.

Consider these statistics: a 1998 Simmons Research reports that "Asian Americans are 71 percent more likely to read a fashion magazine than the average American consumer." AsianWeek.com, an online publication on Asian-American business, also reveals that "Asian Americans read considerably more books and magazines than the average American, creating a huge demand for Asian-focused material."

If you think these numbers are wicked, wait until you hear the Fortune magazine report that "Asian consumers account for over one-third of Prada's revenue." Or that 50 percent of the sales of Louis Vuitton, Yves Saint Laurent and Sephora come from Asian pockets. And we're not just talking about the Japanese.

But while East may be the magazine's target market, Ragaza is not about to fall into an ethnic trap.

"Element is a style magazine," he said in a phone interview with the INQUIRER. "Its Asian outlook may make it unique but I don't want ethnic advertising."

Race issue aside, he'd rather concentrate on offering style-sensitive Asians a glossy coverage of lifestyle components like fashion, beauty, food, shopping and travel.

"I'm addressing young Asians who speak and read English, who are professionals," he says. "Most will be in North America; others will be in Hong Kong, Sydney and London. I want my frame of reference to be global."

In other words, Asian-Americans like him. The son of Filipino immigrants, Ragaza grew up in New Jersey in a family of actors, activists, doctors and even military people. His mother was a newspaper editor in Manila; his father, a political activist.

Perhaps his earliest memory of Manila was surviving an earthquake in the late '60s. "There was a mild earthquake," he recalls. "My mother was reading a book when her coffee cup began to shake and everybody in the house started looking for me. They said I crawled under a crib and escaped death."

The drama of that incident was not lost on Ragaza, who wrote his first short story when he was 11. At 15, he watched "Madame Butterfly" in Central Park and promptly fell in love with opera.

"I like the elegance of the whole operatic lifestyle," he says. "The opera house is a social nexus of many art forms coming together. I am interested in cinema, good writing, photography and costume design. I'm attracted to art forms with so many layers; I think this is the reason I love magazines, movies and opera because they're all like that."

In Summer 1989, after he graduated with a French degree from Columbia University, a chance meeting with Jeff Yang, founder and CEO of A. Magazine, a lifestyle glossy focusing on Asian-Americans, shaped Ragaza's professional career for the next nine years.

"Everything I learned about magazine publishing, I learned at A.," he says. In less than a decade, he worked his way up from writer to editor in chief, a position he held until his departure from the publication in 1998.

During his term, circulation increased from 125,000 to 180,000, especially after Ragaza shifted focus from politics and activism to lifestyle. When A. celebrated its 10th anniversary recently, circulation was hovering at 200,000.

Although the figure is comparable with the circulation of the United States' second or third largest dailies, it is only a drop in the North American publishing market, especially when you consider a 1996 US Census report that the "Asian market in North America totals nearly 15 million."

"While A. went very far, I felt there was a vast market potential that was not being tapped," Ragaza says.

So he did the next best thing: in 1999, he invested his life savings in a partnership with Samir Husni, a leading American expert on new magazines; and Bay, Sherman, Craig and Goldstein, one of the country's top magazine accounting firms. He says in retrospect, "it was such an obvious business idea."

Meanwhile, his bylines appeared in national publications like Vogue, Newsweek and Vibe. He also wrote a book profiling Asian-American achievers like Loida Nicolas Lewis and Dr. David Ho for middle-school students. For a while, Conde Nast beckoned but he decided to do his own thing.

"I love focusing on a market that media are ignoring," he says. "I think Filipinos and Asians in general are beautiful and unbelievably talented and I want to see that reflected in American pop culture."

The preview issue of Element is a hybrid of Ragaza's multifaceted passions. There is a story on three young and successful Asian-Americans, including Filipino-American Cecilia Pagkalinawan who, until recently, was CEO of BoutiqueY3K.com. There is a centerfold feature on Chinese-Canadian actor Terry Chen (a.k.a. Ben Fong-Torres in the Cameron Crowe flick, "Almost Famous") as well as East-meets-West articles on living, food and up-and-coming Asian designers on 7th Avenue.

"I think being an editor is something that happened to me," he says. "I have a very strong eye for design, photography and good writing. I like elegance, good writing, sexiness and beauty. I don't think we see enough of that in anything Asian."

Expectedly, setting up the marquee for this new endeavor was not without birthing pains. A pictorial in Vancouver, for instance, was disrupted by the late arrival of two pairs of Gucci pants worth $5,000.

The magazine also has only a skeletal—if formidable—staff. This includes art director Daniel Chen, who has logged time with Paper Magazine. Contributors also write for mainstream publications like Women's Wear Daily, InStyle, Newsweek and Brill's Content.

"I'm really apprehensive and excited about the whole thing," Ragaza says. "And I can't let fear stop me. It's never a good time to start a business. Failure does not have to paralyze you, but fear of failure does."

E-mail the author at chinachix@hotmail.com

Armani becomes a museum piece

A book collects the clothes and photographs exhibited during the controversial Guggenheim retrospective of Italian designer Giorgio Armani

Giorgio Armani
By Germano Celant and Harold Koda
with Susan Cross and Karole Vail

By Cherish Garcia-Hernandez

DESIGNER Giorgio Armani was catapulted into fashion stardom with the film "American Gigolo," where his designs of shirts, ties and suits were worn by the anti-hero played by a young Richard Gere. A self-trained designer with humble beginnings, Armani revolutionized the traditional men's suit jacket by deconstructing it and taking away elements like padding and lining which, according to him, only made the jackets look rigid. According to Armani, the suit, as we traditionally know it, is a "prison that completely hides the body."

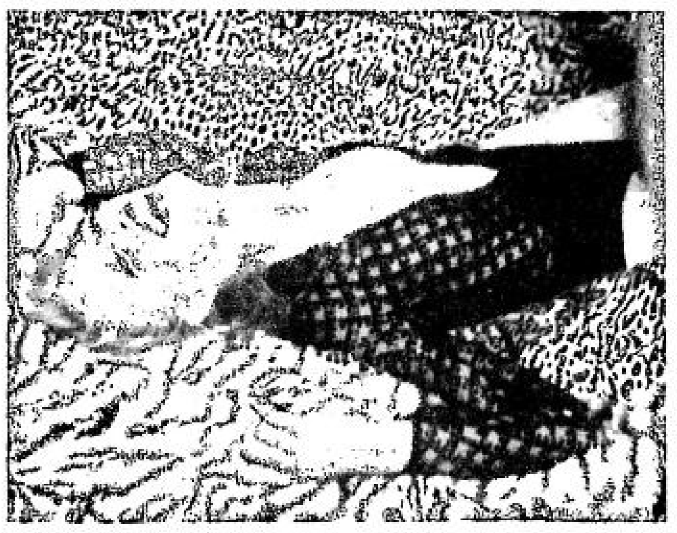
REVIEW

He introduced the use of light fabrics that made the jackets fall seductively and comfortably in a new kind of urban elegance. He also put women in the power suit creating a new androgyny along the way.

Armani's acute understanding of the human body is obvious in his designs. This can probably be attributed to some years he devoted to medical studies. It was while working in the Italian department store La Rinascente that his fashion sense was nurtured. He later apprenticed with Nino Cerruti where he was the stylist for several collections. With the encouragement of longtime companion and partner Sergio Galeotti, Armani went on his own in 1975, and today runs a multimillion dollar empire with boutiques all over the world.

Excess

Although the name Giorgio Armani is synonymous with '80s excess, his designs are far from flamboyant. In fact, his "signature" look is one of elegant restraint and minimalism. He brilliantly creates endless variations on a basic theme of gray, black and white. He prefers to play with muted colors on a monochromatic scale and his greatest strength lies in the texture of his fabrics, which drape the body so naturally that the apogee of an Armani creation is actually when the garment starts to move with the wearer.



DELICATE beadwork

Last October, the Guggenheim museum presented an Armani retrospective chronicling his work in the last 25 years. In line with this, the Guggenheim featured not only photographs from the retrospective but also articles by fashion writers like Hamish Bowles, Valerie Steele and Suzy Menkes as well, which are now collected in a large volume titled "Giorgio Armani." This heavy book also contains gorgeous photographs by Herb Ritts, Ellen Von Unwerth and Patrick Demarchelier. And since many movie stars seem to love Armani, there is also a whole section devoted to quotes from celebrities who wear Armani. From Ricky Martin to Angelica Huston, they all wax rhapsodic about the designer. (How can they not love Armani? They usually get the clothes for free.)

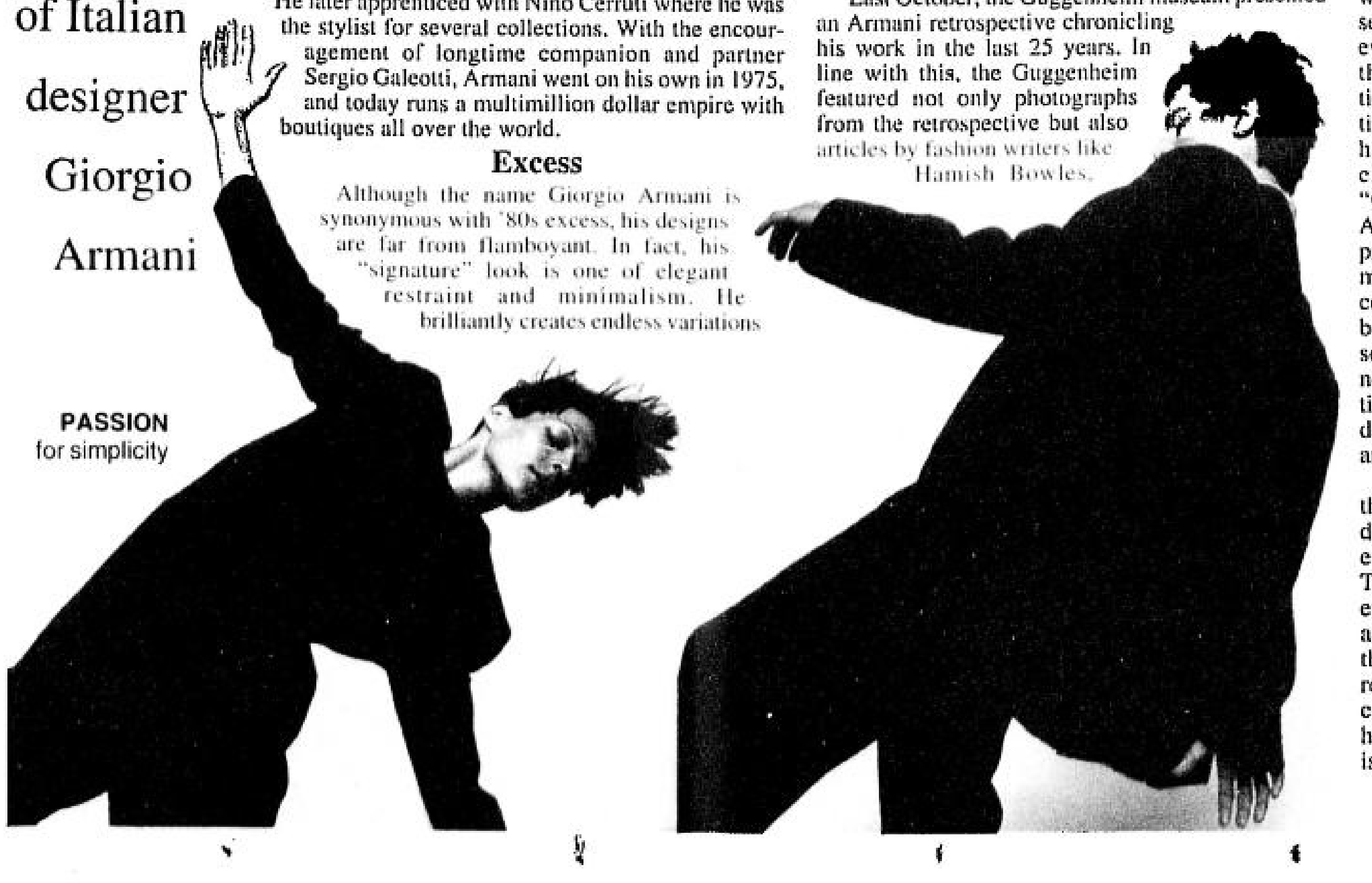
Controversy

The Armani retrospective opened with much controversy. Many critics argued that his work was not important enough to warrant an exhibit of this scale and magnitude. It also did not help that a $15-million donation from Armani to the Guggenheim museum was made public. Narcissism and self-promotion were words used to describe this endeavor. If the book is any indication, well, yes, it reeks of self-importance. However, one cannot deny that Armani's creations are indeed beautiful and that he does have a way with clothes. From his "GAP equivalent" A/X, to his lower-priced Emporio Armani, to his much-coveted Black Label suits, I have yet to see someone wear Armani and not get noticed. Just look at his past Academy Awards creations for devotees like Jodie Foster (not that frou-frou disaster she wore when she won for "The Accused") and Michelle Pfeiffer—they are breathtaking.

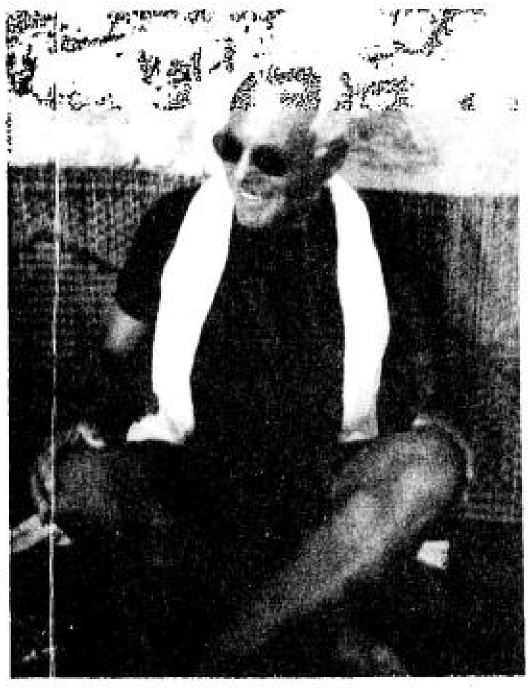
BOOK cover

Today, many young designers like Tom Ford are the center of attention. And while Giorgio Armani did peak in the '80s, a timeless quality is evident even in clothes that he designed over a decade ago. They do not look dated at all. This retrospective, as evidenced from the book, reiterates this. What's with all the fuss that spawned debates in publications like the New York Times? Was it too early to mount a retrospective? Maybe. But in our opinion, not because his work is marginal, but rather because it is highly possible that the best that Armani has to offer is yet to come.

E-mail the author at cherishgh@yahoo.com



PASSION for simplicity



GIORGIO Armani gets rid of the stodgy suit.

ARMANI became a household name when Richard Gere wore his clothes in "American Gigolo."

More partners for a cool summer

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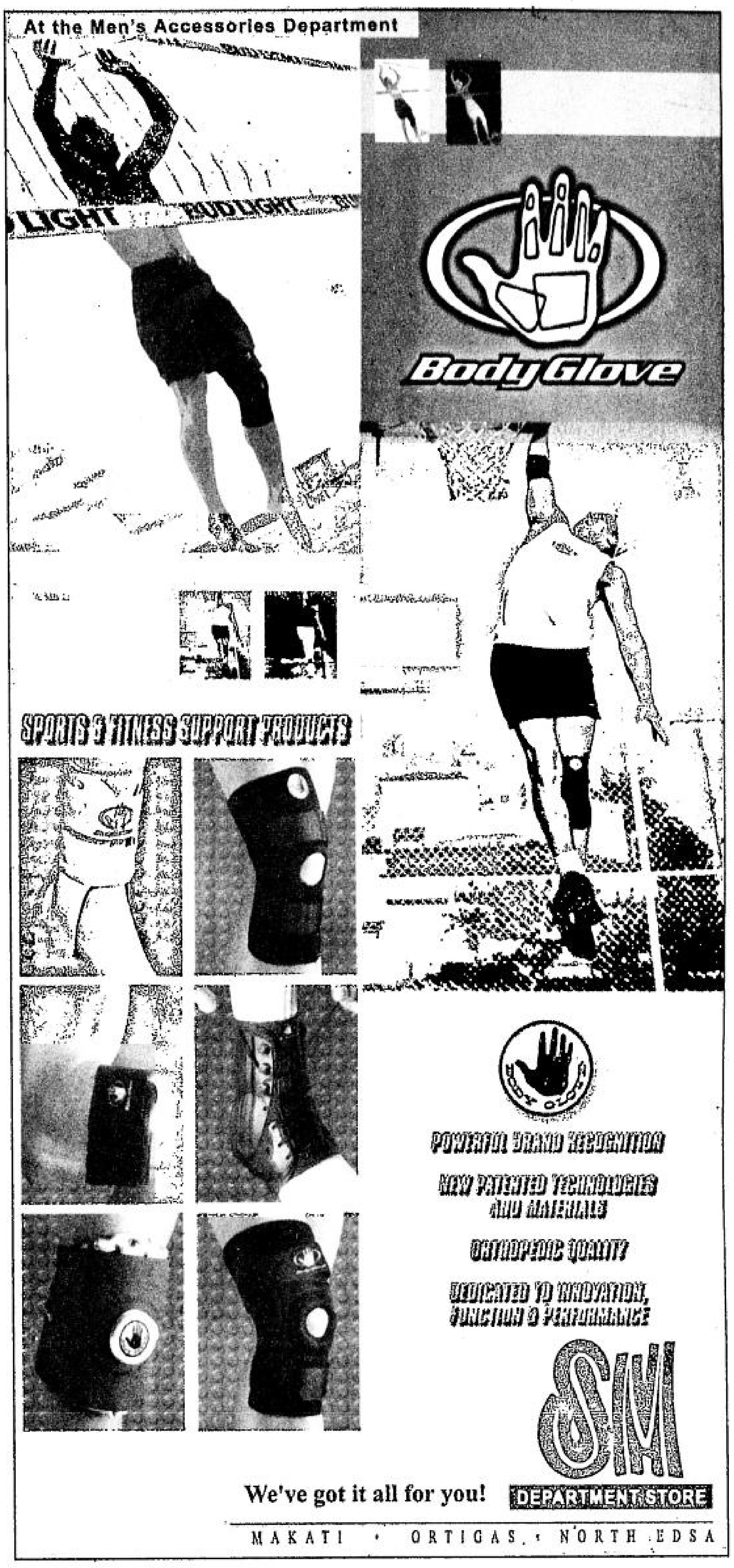
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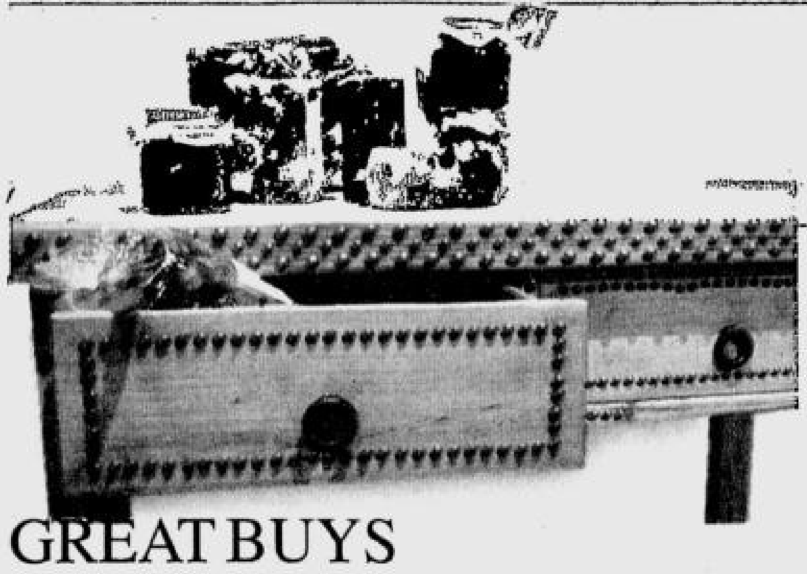
LIFESTYLE Home



A LITTLE potpourri, a few candles and this gorgeously beaded console create a warm and cozy corner in your home.

GREAT BUYS

Zoned for home and hearth

By Mercedes Reyes
Photos by Chito Vecina
Art direction by Albert Avellana

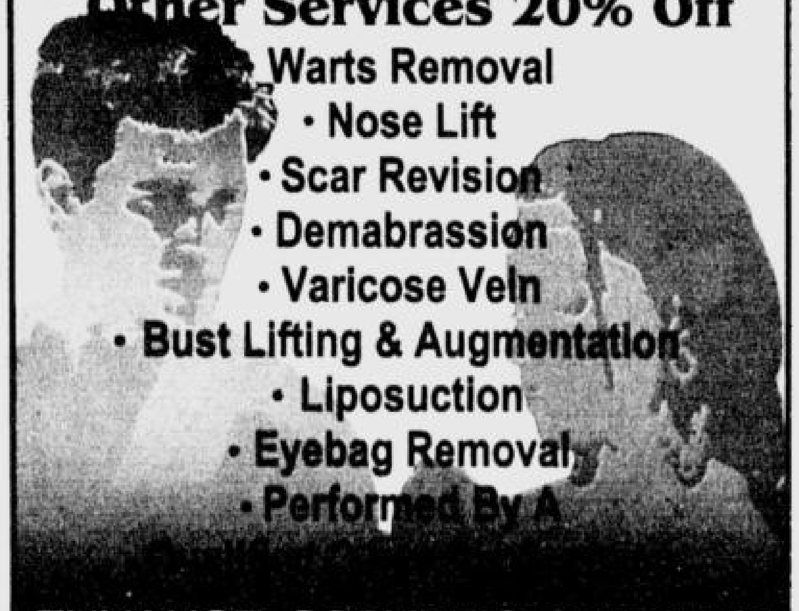
ENTER the Home Zone: Glorietta's new annex devoted entirely to household accessories and furniture that are truly affordable.

Yes, some items are pricey, but a steal compared to similar pieces sold under designer labels. The zone is a more realistic approach to home decorating—and a treasure trove of *butingtings* and whatnots for those who want to buy a gift that looks far more expensive than it really is.

The stores

Home and Beyond caters to lovers of the country look (wrought-iron furnishings, picture frames, potpourri) as well as those in search of knick-knacks and gifts (candles,

GREAT/ p.F2



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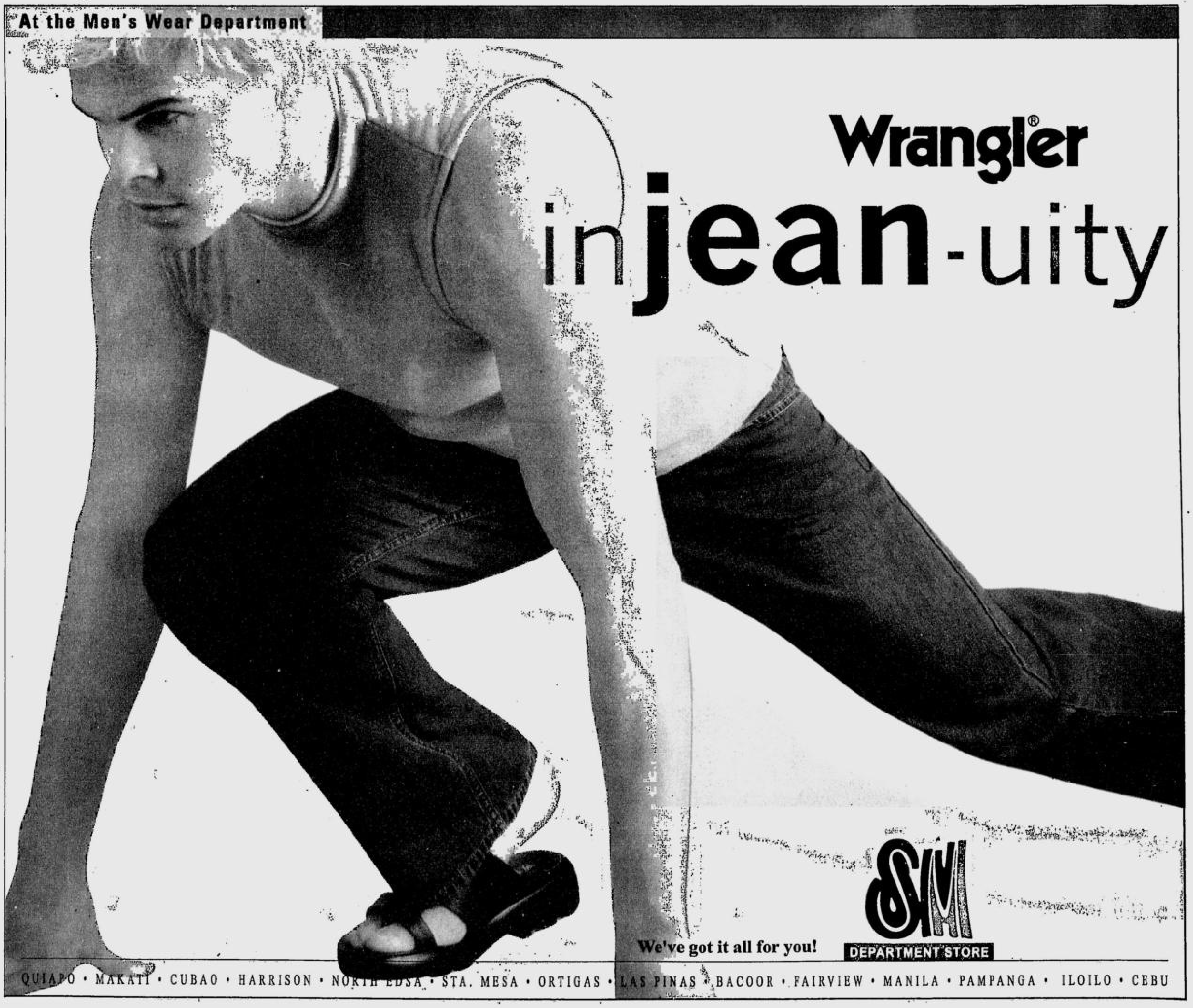

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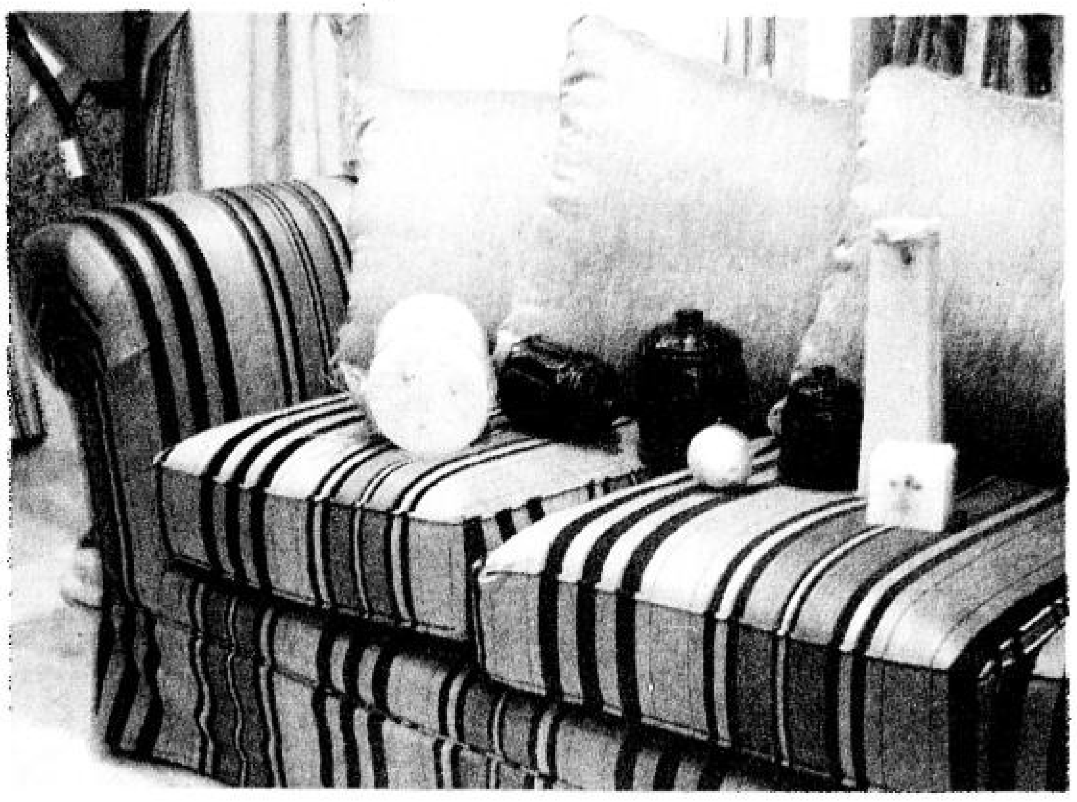
BLACK and white are the simple palette of modern serenity with a leather sofa and beaded candleholders.



THIS sofa set is not only inexpensive—you can pick the material that will match the rest of your décor. With a fully coordinated living room, all you'll need are candles and ceramics for that final touch.

Zoned for home and hearth

It's a pastiche of functional, fun and kitschy items

COLOR, color, color! Have a little fun and go wild with a corner of your home: crazy prints, bright shades.

(From page F1)

soaps). Custom Clay also leans toward that theme with brightly glazed ceramics emblazoned with fruits and flowers.

Earth Colors, on the other hand, offers terracotta vases and pots and potpourri holders suitable for a country home—or any room that has a natural, back-to-the-basics feel.

Urban Effects is more Oriental in style, its antique pots, hand-carved sculptures and ornate frames as still and serene as the prewar world. Romance is Victorian: rich, sensuous, lavish. Robles Heritage, on the other hand, has a similar European ambience, but specializes in lamps and stained glass.

If you want something modern and sleek, Dimensione carries furnishings imported from Scandinavia: colorful tables, chairs, racks and stools that are as functional as they are visually appealing. They are also more affordable (to give you an idea: some of their tables cost as much as one store's wall clock—go figure).

Kish's items are modern, but with softer lines. Their furniture and accessories are made of natural materials and are simple, graceful and very no-frills. Restoration has similar pieces, along with smaller accent pieces like frames and candleholders. They resemble items from well-known international brands like Crate & Barrel and Pottery Barn.

Just a few steps away, Pinewood Barn sells pinewood beds, sofas and one-of-a-kind chairs. Customers can also have pieces made to order. The three stores offer items that will appeal to anyone who wants a cozy, simple look.

If you have found the look and just want one or two items to brighten up a corner, Regalong Pambahay and Lumina offer knick-knacks like candles, frames, place mats, potpourri pots and boxes that can serve as accent pieces or gifts.

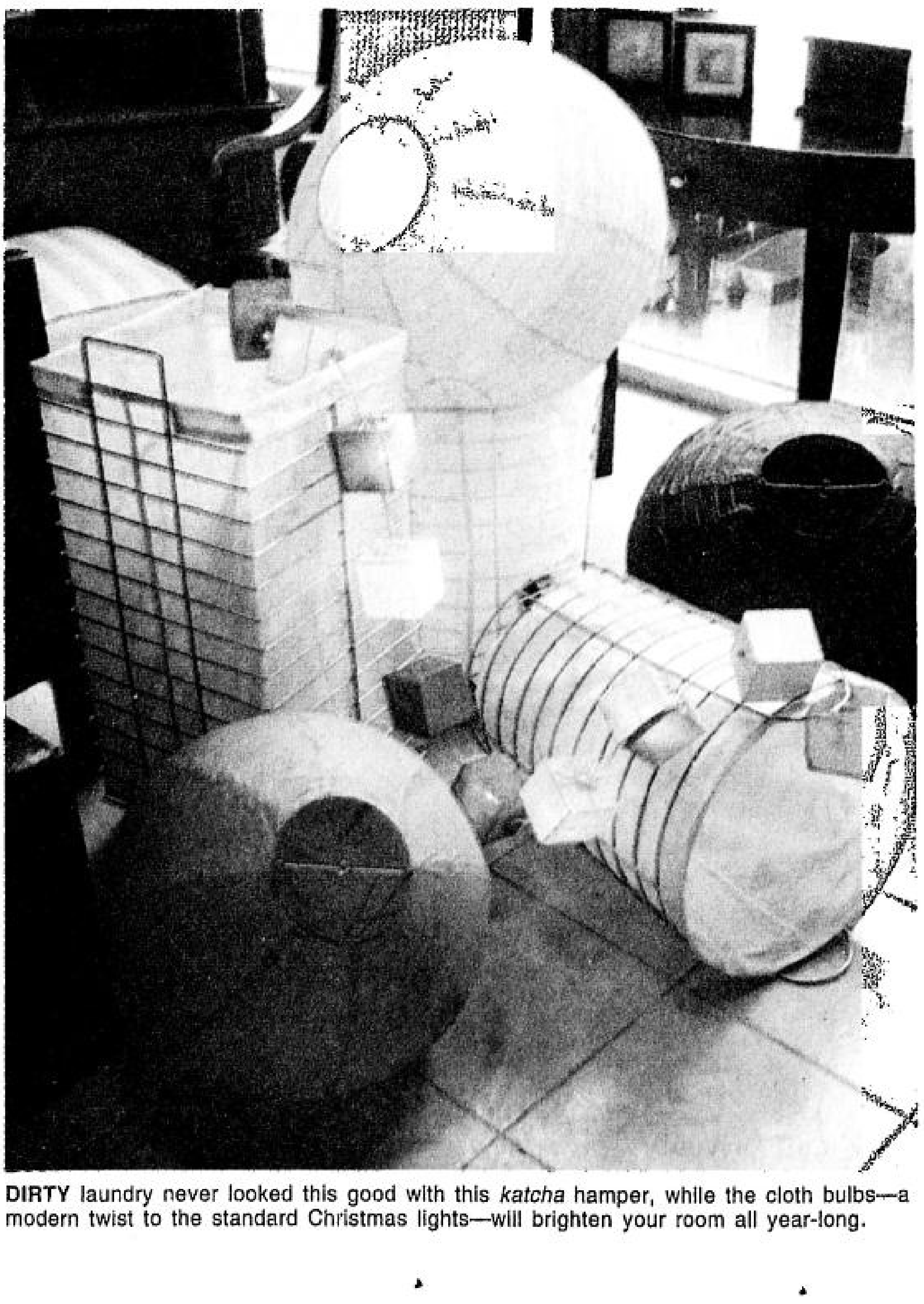
Specialty stores Shell Canvas (cloths for sofas, carpets and curtains) and Victoria (religious figurines) allow customers to freely pick from a selection much wider than what's usually available.

The buys

The Inquirer scouted the stores for some of the best buys, items that were noticeably cheaper than those sold in the market, or simply beautiful and unique steals that were well worth the cost.

Create a modern but serene living room with a three-seater leather sofa by Kish (P38,000) and beaded candleholders (P250) from Regalong Pambahay.

Country charm gets a unique twist in this beaded console (Pinewood Barn, P7,200) that needs no added décor. A little potpourri (Homefront, P90 for small bags and P240 for larger bags) and scented candles (Homefront, P 250) and you create a cozy, welcoming corner in your living room.



DIRTY laundry never looked this good with this *katcha* hamper, while the cloth bulbs—a modern twist to the standard Christmas lights—will brighten your room all year-long.

Fan the flames of faith with a one-of-a-kind alabaster statue of the Virgin Mary (Victoria, P24,000) and candles to carry your prayers to the sky. Star- and flower-shaped candles in citronella and apple scents, Custom Clay Shop, P16-20; silver and glass candleholder, Restoration, P120; sand and rattan candleholders, Regalong Pambahay; thin red candles, Romance, P99; fish candleholders, Earth Colors, P75. Shot on Restoration bed frame made of Douglas fir and leather, P38,000.

Instead of a painting, create a still life of fruit and light with a hand-made paper lamp (Urban Effects, P4,795) and fruits that look real enough to chew on (Urban Effects, imported from Thailand, P95 each)

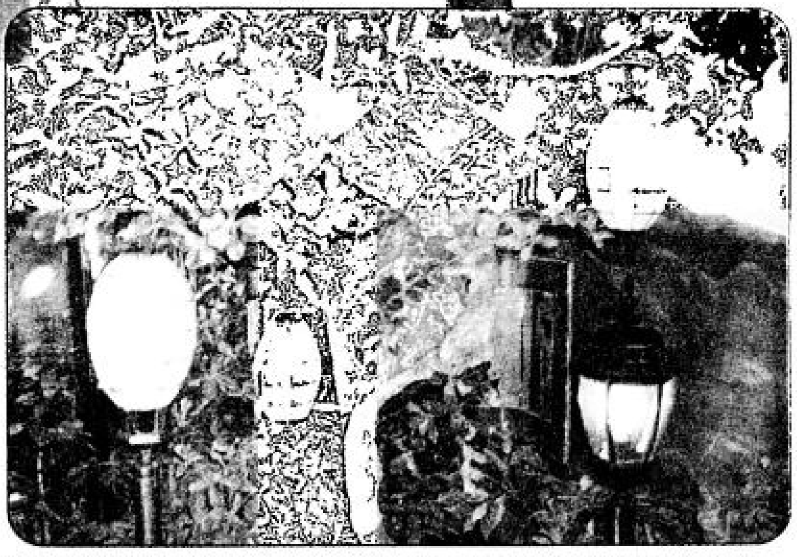
Branches borrow the colors and music of man, with *batik* clothes (Home and Beyond, P325-P445), bamboo chimes, *capiz* lamps or an antique lamp post (Robles Heritage, *capiz* lamp P300-P350; chimes, P325; lamp post, P18,700).

Add simple, playful touches to your home, with a simple *katcha* hamper (Restoration, P1,600) or colorful lanterns to cast merry colors on your wall (Home and Beyond, Japanese lanterns, P295-P395), (Restoration, colored cloth lamps, P2,000).

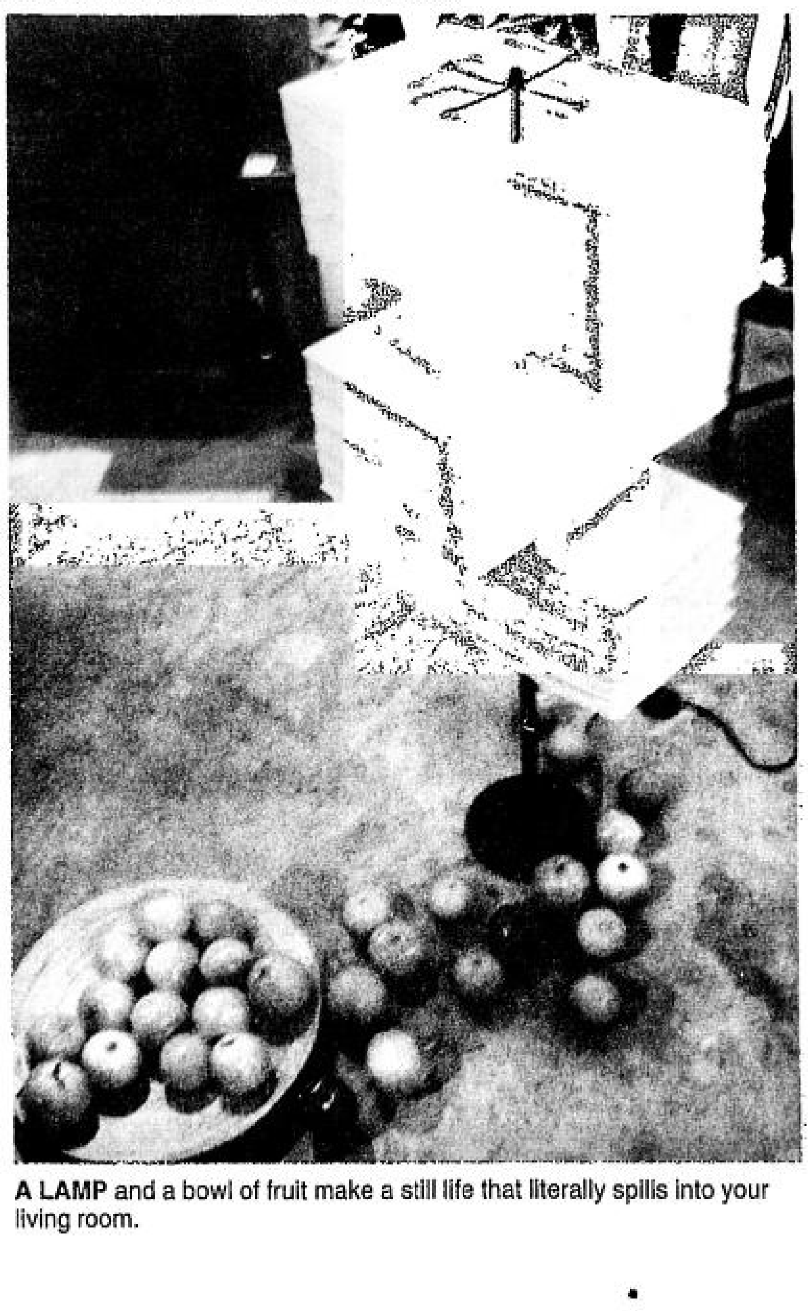
At P30,000 (Shell Canvas) this six-piece sofa set is a real steal. You can even choose the material to match the rest of your home. Jars (Romance, P599) and candles (Shell Canvas, tall candle, P795) complete the look when set on a simple table.

Add bright bursts of color to your home with Dimensione's stool (P1,550), Blue Polet table (P585) and yellow Belair (P1,295). The simple lines keep the look sleek, but the playful hues are anything but stark. Leopard print ceramics (Custom Clay, P155) and glycerin soaps (Romance, P89 each) are accessories that have the same sense of humor.

PURE, welcoming, the Virgin Mary catches the burning prayers in this beautiful, simple altar.



THE LIGHTS and colors of nature? Lamps and *batik* cloths may make a strange, yet beautiful, garden.



A LAMP and a bowl of fruit make a still life that literally spills into your living room.

Care tips for leather-upholstered furniture

JUST as leather currently is making fashion news, it is also making stylish home statements at Our Home.

Sleek sofas and chairs upholstered in Italian leather stand out with their quality, design and construction. Soft and supple, these definitely showcase modern lifestyles.

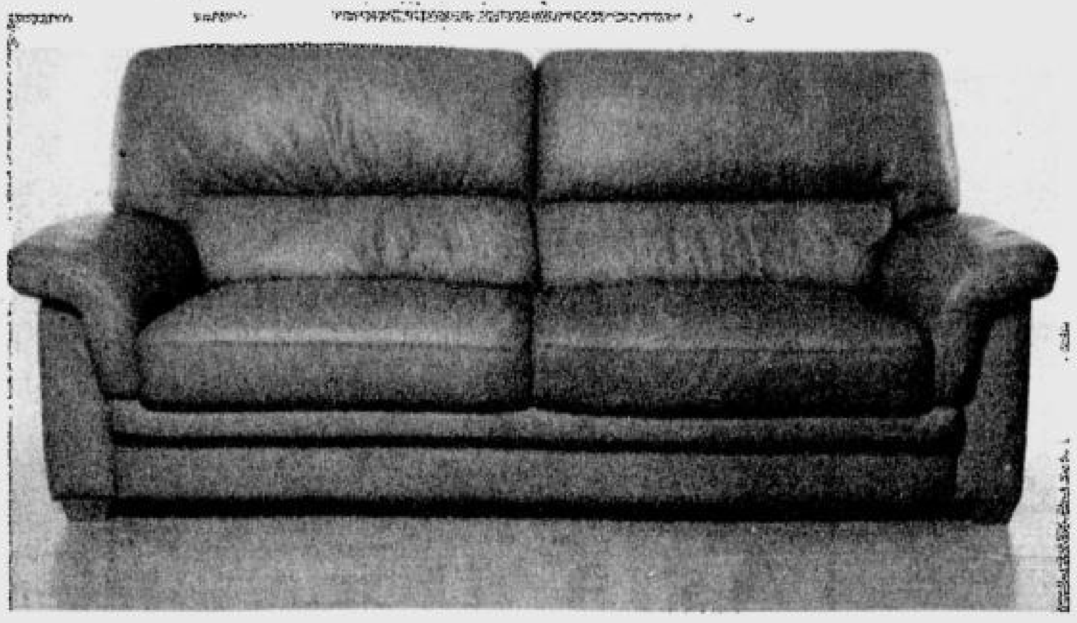
But more than just being decorative, leather is the strongest upholstery material known to man. Nature has created its strong physical nature by weaving an intricate network of leather fibers. Leather will not easily burn or melt, and because of improvements in the tanning process, today's leathers will remain supple indefinitely.

There is no other material to match the feel and aroma of good leather. And the good news is that with proper care, leather can stand up to the rigors of daily life in the home or office. Here are some care tips for leather upholstered furniture from Our Home:

- Don't place your furniture too near a source of heat. Make sure there is a minimum distance of 20-30 cm between your furniture and heat source.
- Protect your leather furniture from direct sunlight.
- Keep the leather pores free from dust particles. Wipe completely with a soft rag, preferably once a week.
- Try saddle soap to clean leather and vinyl upholstery. Just follow the manufacturer's directions for good results.
- Or clean the furniture with a gentle cleaner preferably once a month if the furniture is used daily. Don't rub. Sponge gently until all grime and stains are absorbed.
- Use only guaranteed products. Common cleaning materials can cause severe damage and costly repairs. But with regular cleaning and care, you can enjoy your leather furniture for a long time.

The leather upholstered sofa and chair collection is available at Our Home, located at the LG/F SM Megamall.

ELEGANT black two-seater Schapel leather sofa with silver steel chrome feet


COFFEE brown three-seater Blaydon leather sofa with wooden feet. Matching Blaydon accent armchair is also available.

COZY blue Huron accent armchair made of Italian leather

OLIVE green three-seater and accent armchair Tassoni leather sofa

MUSTARD yellow Valerio leather accent armchair

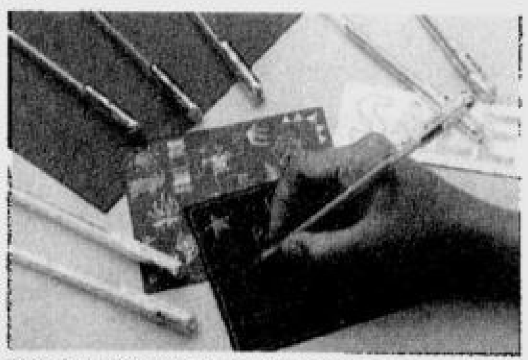
Lasting impressions

THE PERMANENT marker came to life some 40 years ago as an industrial marking device. It has come a long way since it was initially used in making large signs that could easily be seen on billboards, packing cases, cargo boxes, cartons, etc. This is where the marker made its first impression. The marker of today is basically of the same make and structure as the marker since the 1960s. It has, however, become more versatile in terms of use; the marker has now become an office utility or should we say, even a household name.

Having supplied more than two-thirds of the world's requirements, PentelR came about with permanent markers using the technology called "capillary feed." Basically, a capillary is a fiber which holds liquid, and when it comes into contact with a finer fiber it will, quite naturally, pass on the liquid to the finer fiber. The ink passes from the tampon to the tip and then onto whatever surface it is marking, effortlessly. Having paved the demand and need for permanent markers, the success of other permanent marker brands in the market today is, in a big sense, owed to PentelR. Because of its resounding success and reputation over the years, many of us have adapted the PentelR name as a generic nomenclature for permanent markers: "Do you have a pentel pen?"

The PentelR permanent marker also uses a spirit-based ink; it writes on almost any surface, dries quickly, is waterproof and, most important of all, has a high degree of permanence—removable only by using a special solvent.

PentelR permanent markers come in different variants—N50 for Bullet Point width, N60-Chisel Point and, in 1995, PentelR developed the Maxiflo series, an alcohol-based liquid ink which is thicker than other markers to provide better adhesion to paper.


THE MARKER has, throughout the years, become more versatile in terms of use.

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Treasure hunting at the mall can lead to a wonderful Find

CATS (P950-1,650) play amid brass pumpkins (P500-3,000) and pillboxes (P200-850).

Asia in a stall

BY MERCEDES REYES
PHOTOS BY CHITO VECINA
ART DIRECTION BY ALBERT AVELLANA

I HAD spent the last 30 minutes walking up and down the corridors of the Goldcrest Building, Ayala Center. "I'm lost," I thought, which was pretty embarrassing since navigating Glorietta isn't what anyone would call a Herculean task. And the people I was supposed to meet—Asian Finds proprietors Nini Magsino and Rica Rodis—had told me their furniture store was "impossible to miss."

Finally, I found the shop. I had actually passed by it several times, but the small stall was easily dwarfed by the surrounding clothes and phone displays. And when I stepped inside…

Well, what can I say, it was an Asian Find: A treasure trove of miniature Buddhas cut from bone, ivory opium pipes, brass elephants and graceful wood carvings of cats and women bowed in prayer. On one side, scarves and suits cut from Thai silk and Vietnamese jewelry were draped and displayed like a sultan's daughter's boudoir. I couldn't believe I was still in Glorietta. I had trouble remembering I was still in the Philippines, actually.

THE ELEGANTLY beaded costume of this Thai puppet (P950) adds color and character to any room.

All items in the store were finds Nini and Rica had fallen in love with and brought home from their travels as souvenirs to share—some with old friends, others with customers they eventually befriended. Apparently, Asian Finds nearly always become a favorite haunt of those who stumble into it. "People would walk in, looking surprised when they see our wares. Then they spend a long time choosing what they want. Soon they come back, and come back again," they said.

Cozy clutter

It's a cozy store, cluttered with handmade knickknacks and curios from all over Asia. Nini and Rica try to preserve the charm by buying just a few of each item they find. In this age of mass production, they feel it's important to collect a few pieces that were as lovingly chosen as lovingly made—items that speak your personality, tell a story and add a unique touch to the special place you call home.

Rica and Nini also made sure most of the items were affordable. A stunning glass and tin ashtray is P450; a one-of-a-kind hook shaped like a dragonfly is P350; while embroidered silk cell phone pouches are P300 each. These items are functional but great conversation pieces, and make lovely gifts for people who simply don't need another mug. They also carry clay incense holders shaped like elephants, fish and turtles; antique Chinese pillows made from ceramic; dream catchers, chimes, puppets, masks, tapestries, drums, flutes… the sheer variety was rather dizzying. No wonder customers would spend so much time looking around the stall, fingering each item like an archaeologist, driven to ask: "Where is this from? What does this do? When was this made? How was it made?"

And this is the reaction that Nini and Rica love the most. They find great satisfaction in seeing others enjoy what they have picked, which is why they always stay in the store despite having hired salesladies. They want to attend to the customers' questions—share how they found the item, why they liked it, even give suggestions on how to display the items. They even familiarize themselves with the hobbies and preferences. "Like there's this man who collects elephants, another who collects fish. So we watch out for those in our travels, and when we come back we say, "*O, ayan*, we found something just for you."

GRACE a side table with a Filipino sipa ball (P180), a metal opium pipe (P450) or a small Thai mask (P450).

The success of the store has inspired Nini and Rica to open a larger one in the newly renovated Star Mall where they have more space to display their wares. They are also considering opening a store in Alabang Town Center. Still, there is an undeniable charm in their small nook in a crowded Glorietta corridor. The stores will certainly be more accessible (and probably easier to locate). But I think I will always have a soft spot for the stall that had taken me nearly an hour to stumble into: Slightly hidden, slightly out of place, ready to surprise those lucky enough to chance upon their Asian Find.

DOLPHINS, stars and leaf chimes (P250-450) welcome good luck with every rustle of the wind.

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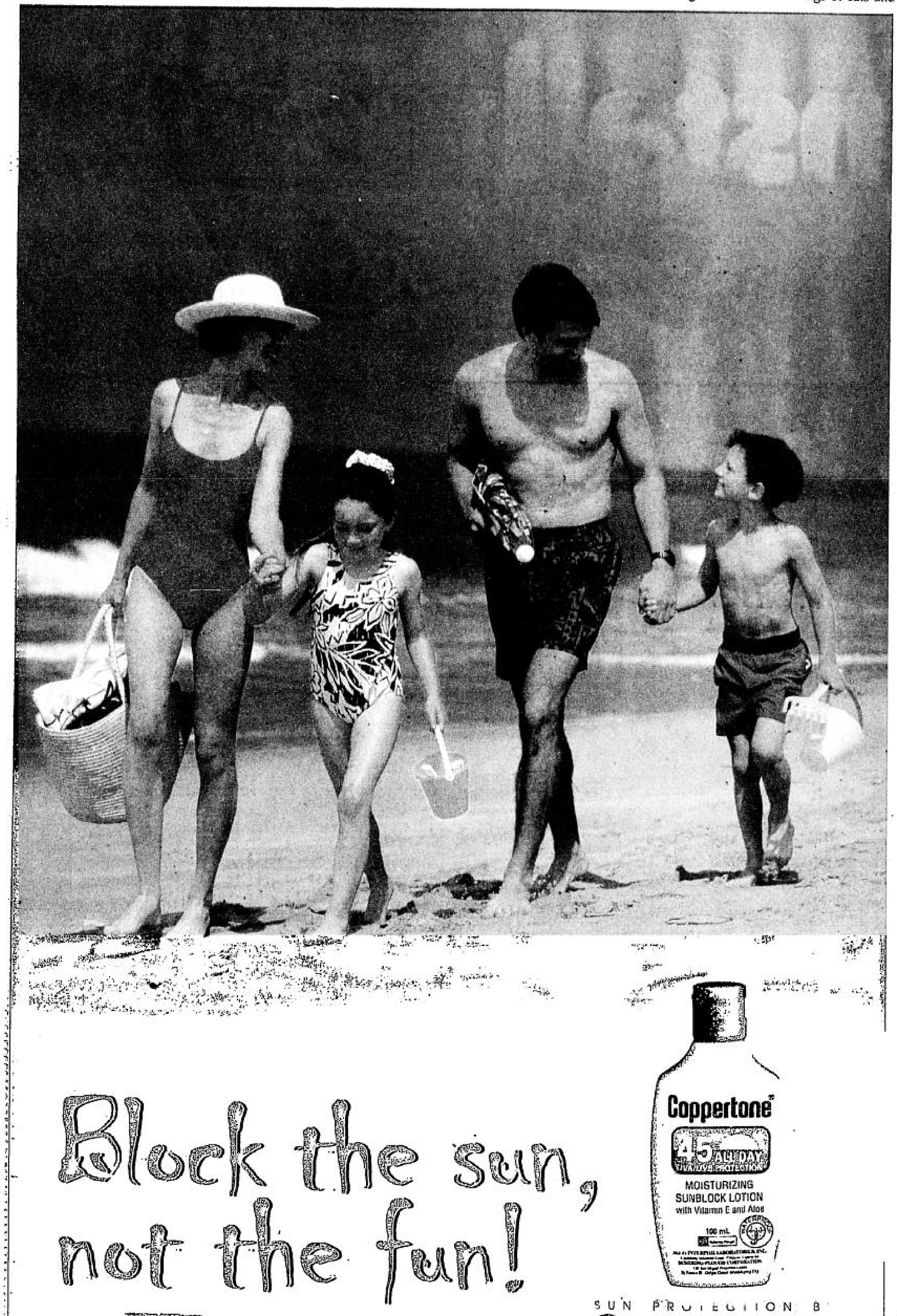

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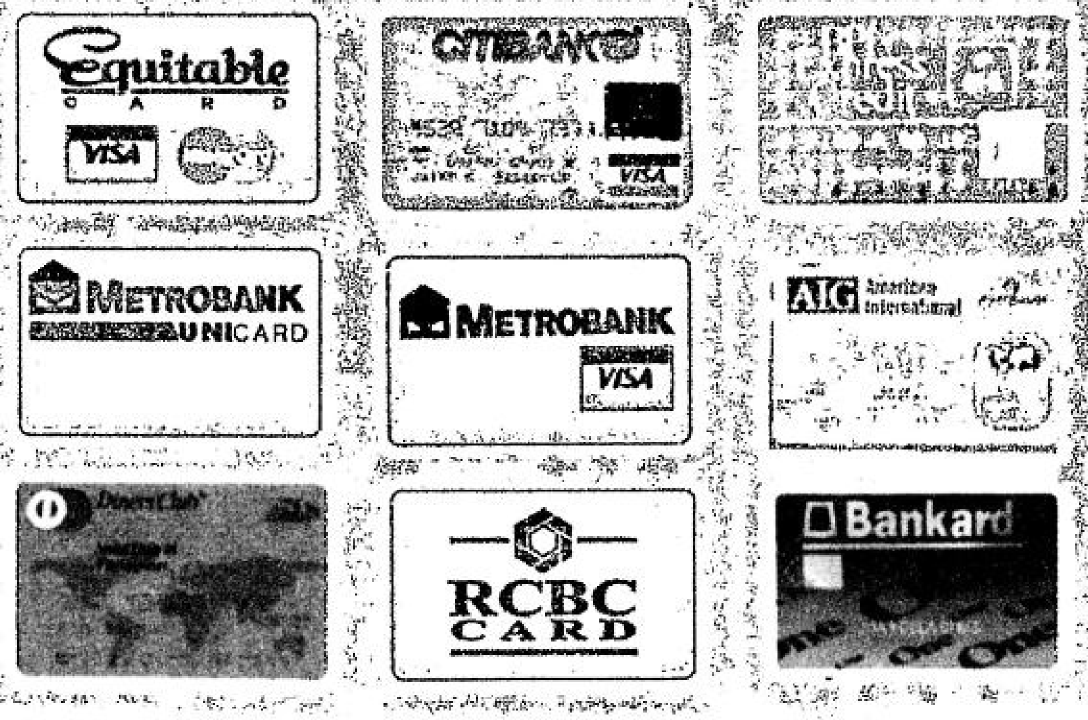

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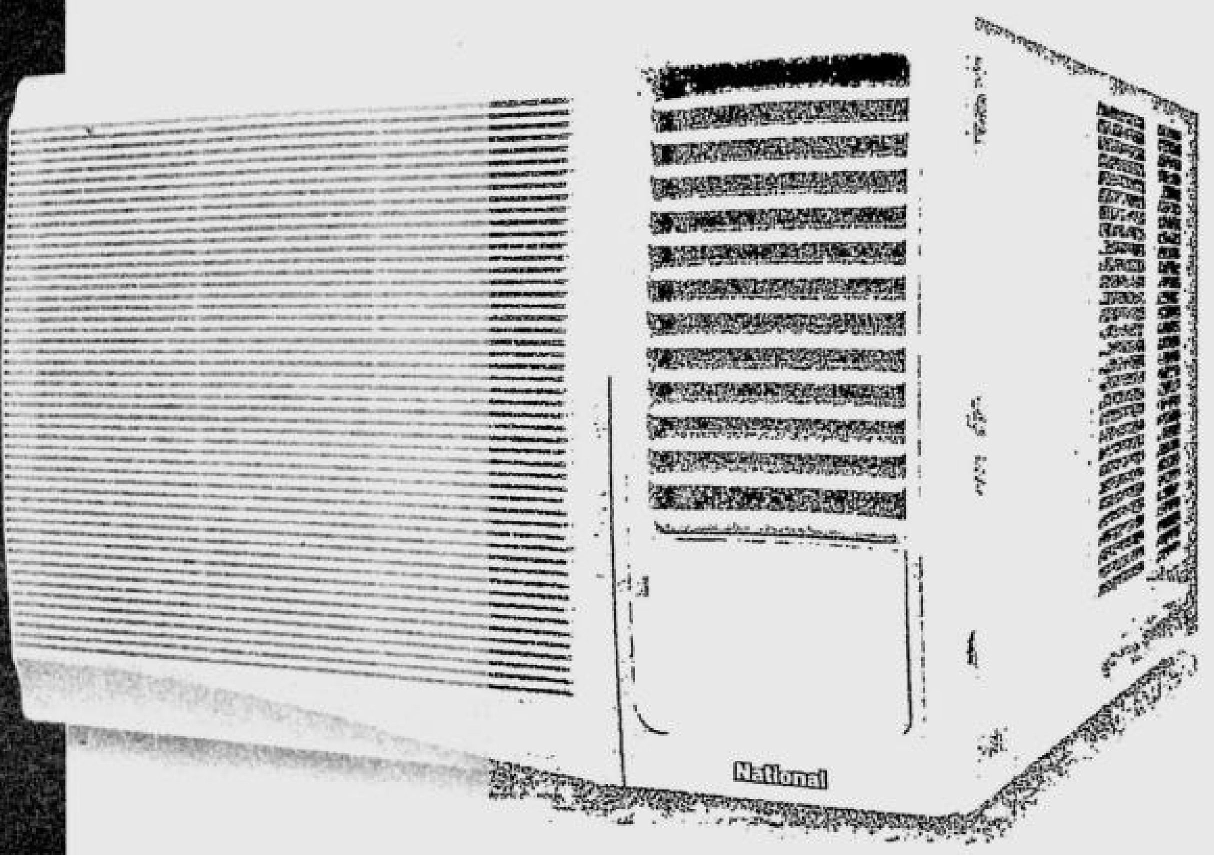

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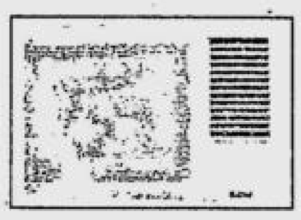

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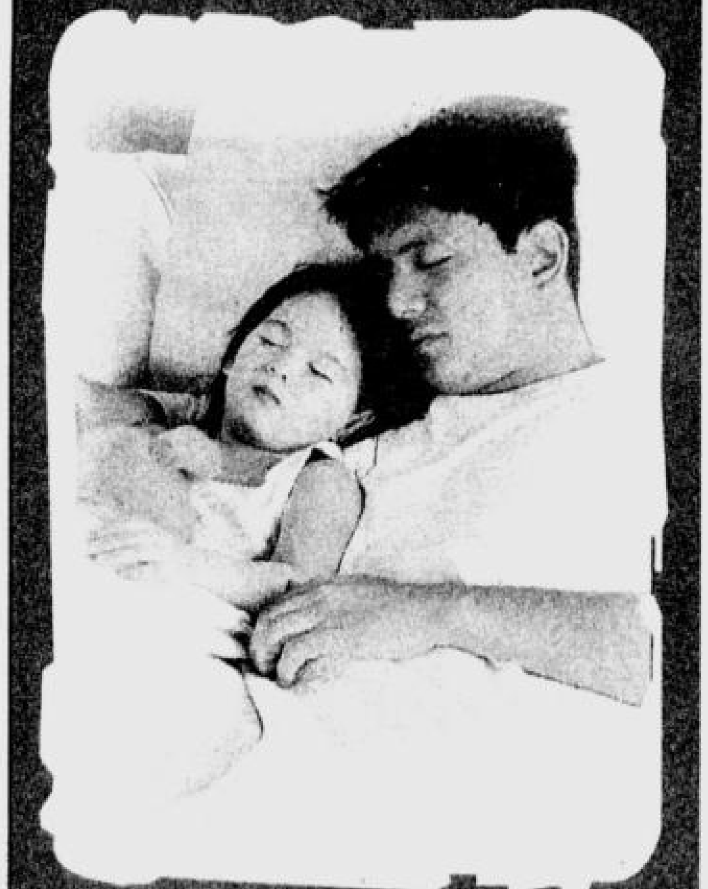

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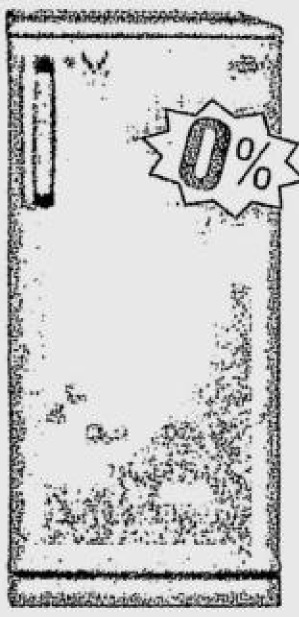

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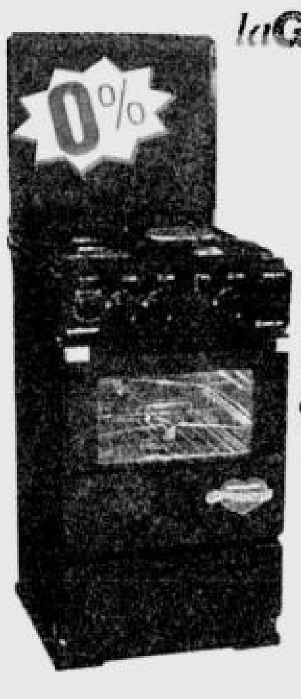

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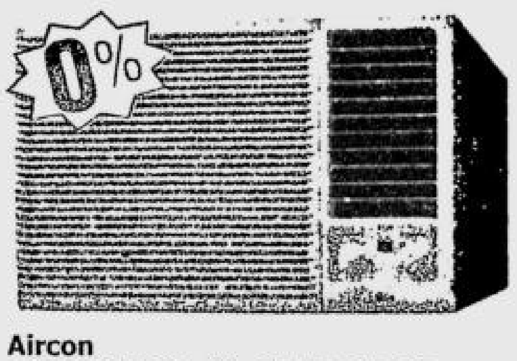

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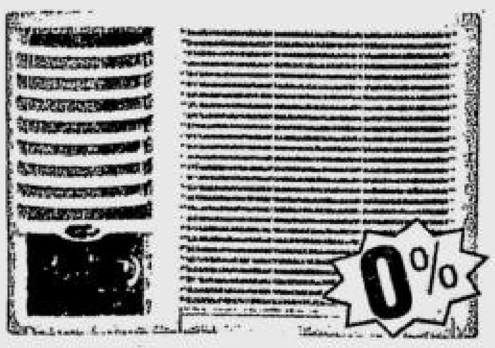

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Room Aircon
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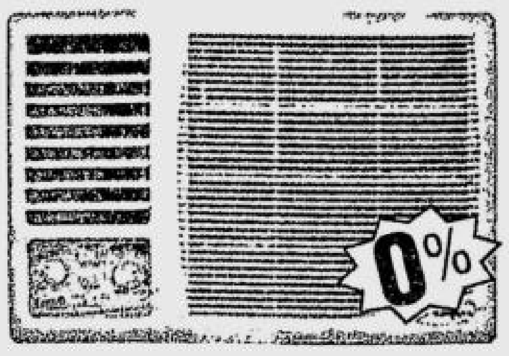

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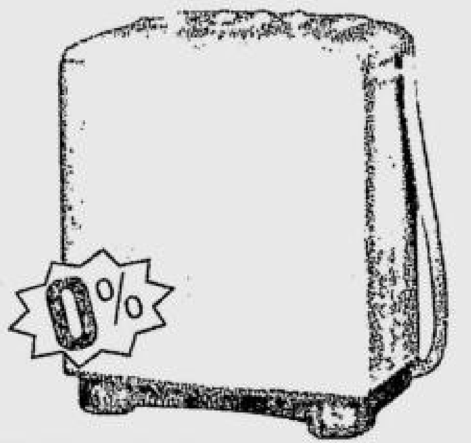

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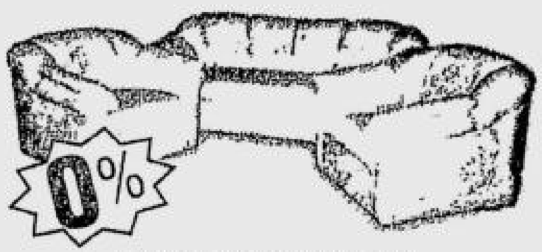

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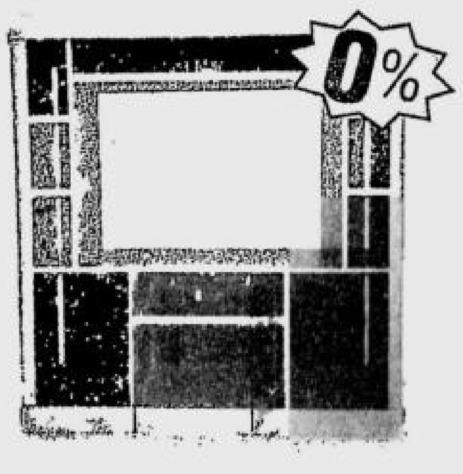

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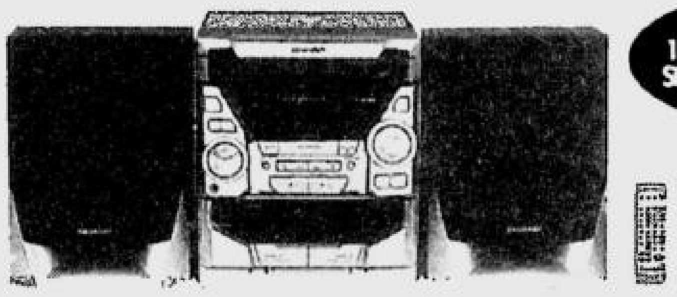

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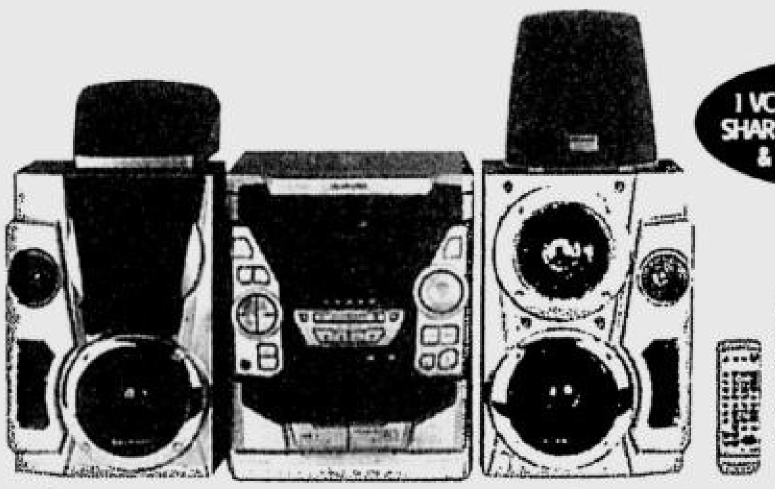

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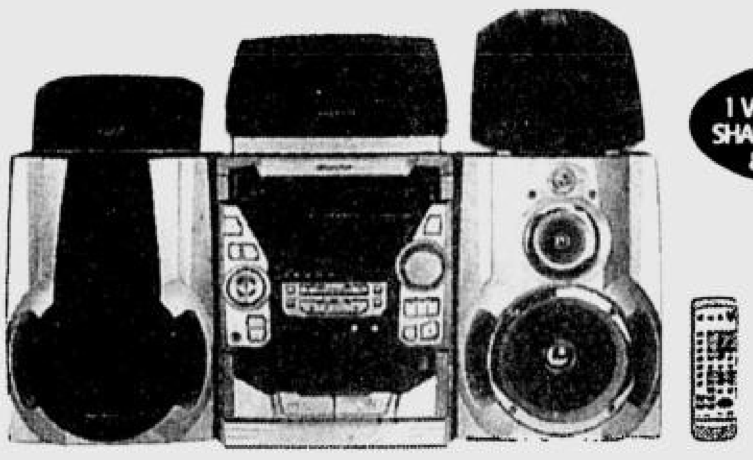

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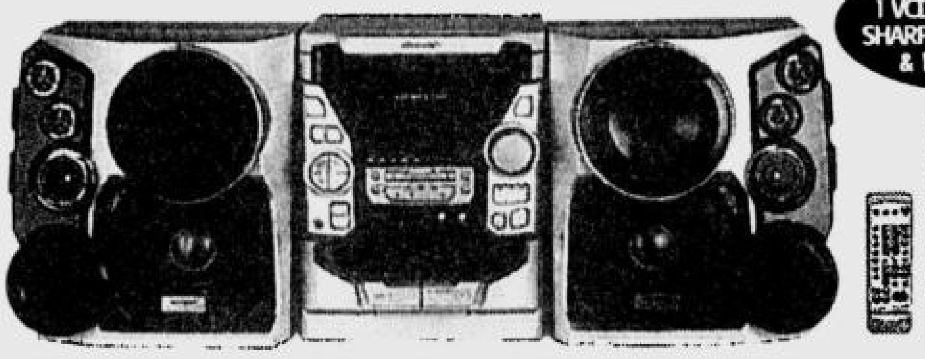

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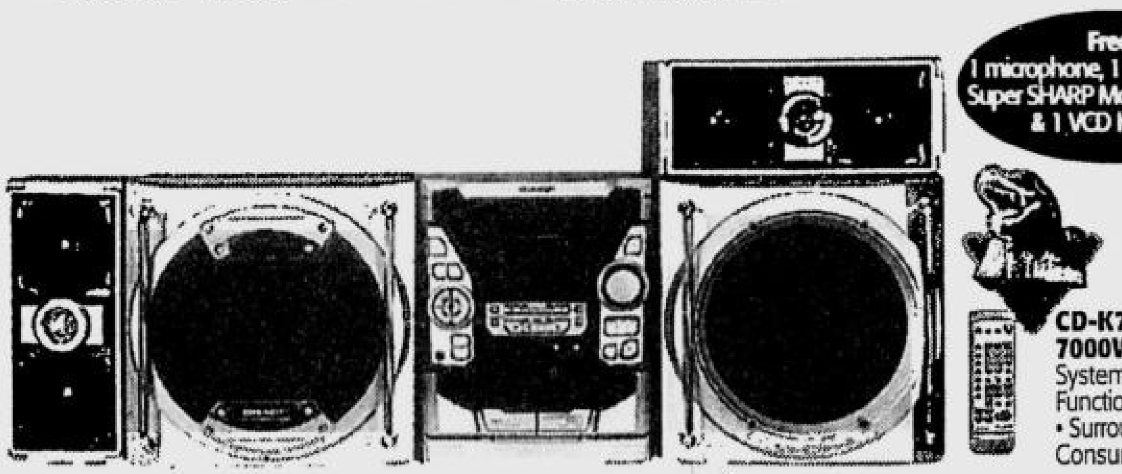

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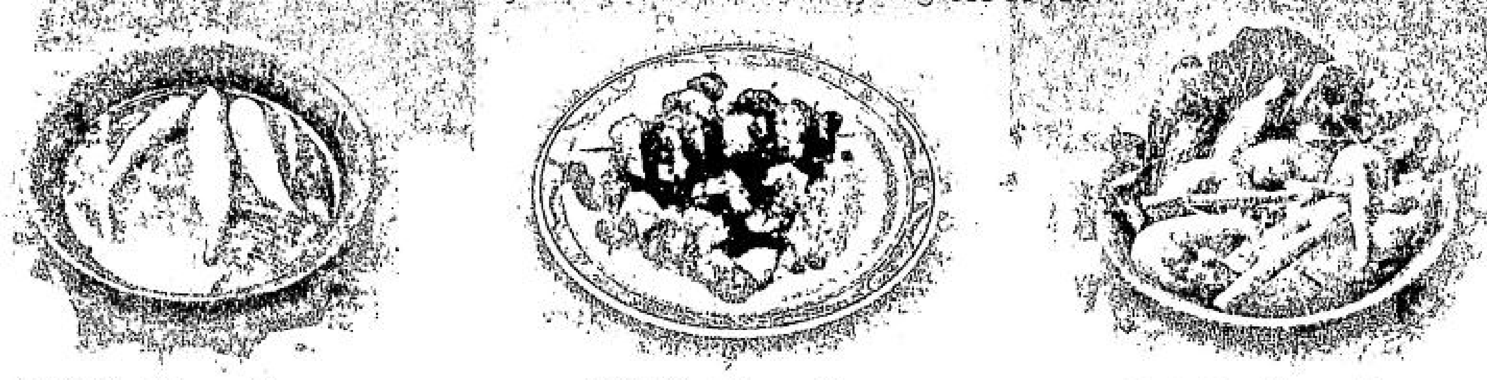
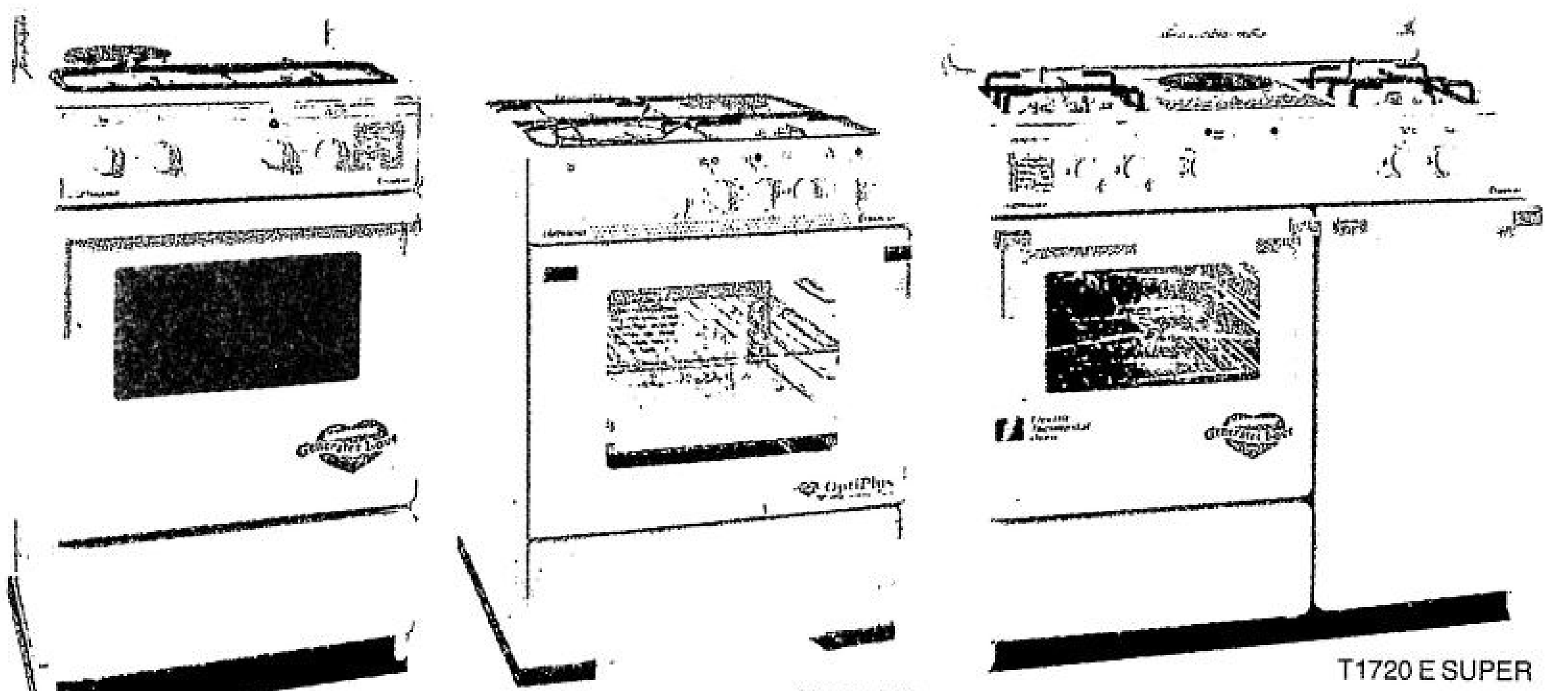


500 Series. **600 Series.** **700 Series.**



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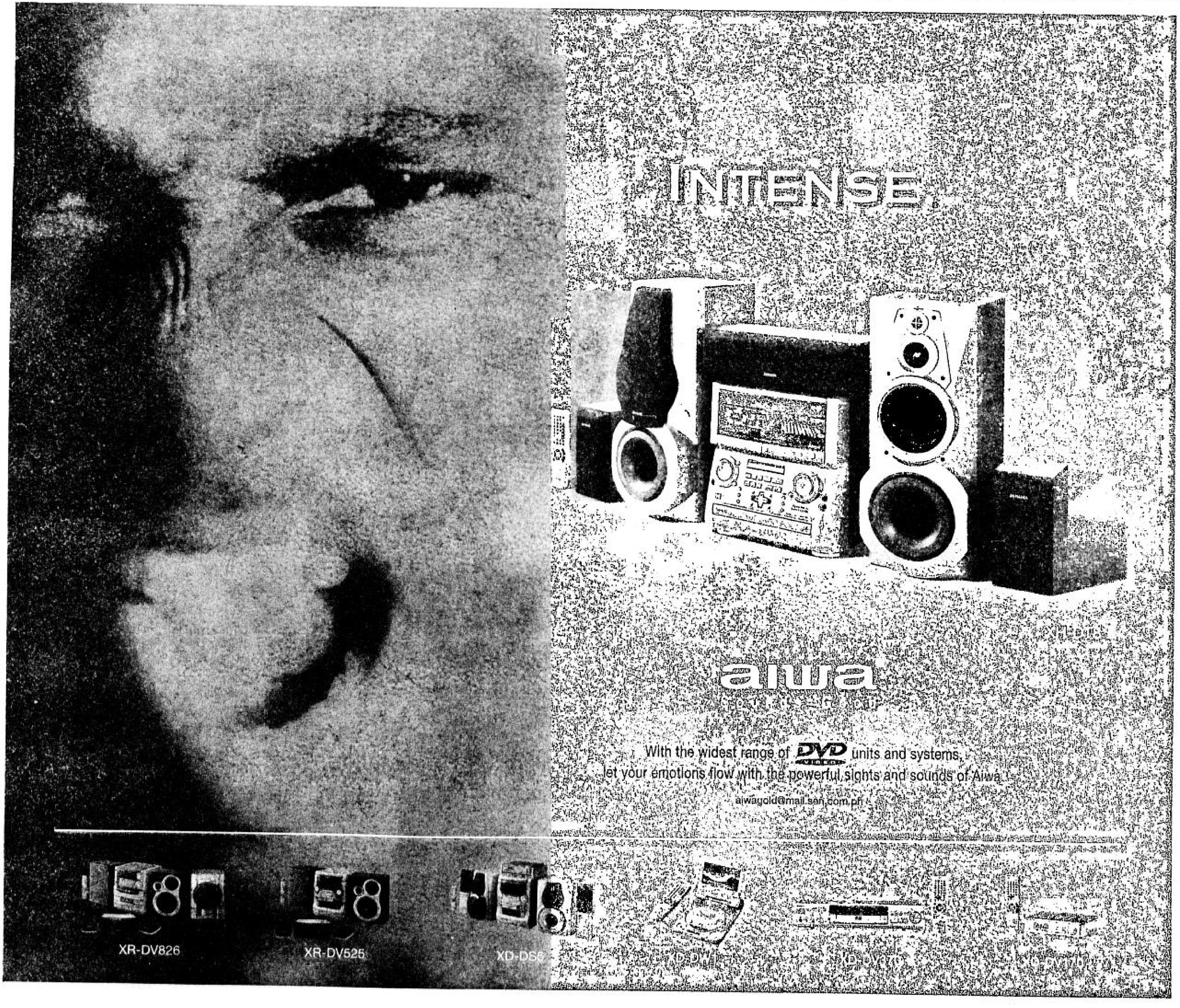
Abenson brings the good life closer to you

Expanding our branch network and opening more stores to be closer to Filipino homes has always been one of Abenson's main thrusts. With over 37 branches within Metro Manila, Laguna, Cavite, Batangas and Tarlac, surely there is an Abenson store close to you. Visit Abenson today.

METRO MANILA	
Alabang	850-8848 to 50
Alabang-Filinvest, Festival Mall	850-3775 or 79
Cubao-Farmers	911-1071
Cubao-Rustan's	911-2312/13
Ermita-Robinsons	536-8029/536-7914
Greenhills-Unimart	721-0590/84
Kalookan-Grand Central	363-5246/383-5338
Las Piñas	872-0576/77
Mandaluyong	631-5188/631-8161 to 64
Muntinlupa-Metropolis	809-8172/74
Makati-Quad 1	812-6748/816-3911
Novaliches-Big R Hypermart	938-6901
Ortigas-Ever	656-6643 to 47
Parañaque-Pearl Plaza, Tambo	851-8401 to 05
Pasong Tamo-Waltermart	813-4444/894-3730
Robinsons Galleria	632-9101 to 05
E. Rodriguez-Waltermart	724-2528
Shungri-La Plaza	638-8017 to 19
SM City Carpark	Tels. 920-9151 to 53 926-8829
Sucat-Jaka	829-2686/88
BATANGAS	
Lipa, Batangas Fiesta World Mall	(043) 404-1657 (043) 404-1655
BULACAN	
Bulacan-Meycuayan	(044) 228-2117
CAVITE	
Cavite-Carmona	(046) 430-2702 to 04
Cavite-Rosario	(046) 438-5450
Imus, Cavite-Lotus	(046) 515-5749
Imus-Robinsons	(046) 875-2448/49
Dasmariñas-Waltermart	(046) 416-2104
CEBU	
R-Abenson, Cebu	(032) 253-9328
LAGUNA	
Pavilion Mall, Biñan, Laguna	(049) 411-4510/11
San Pablo, Laguna	Tel. (049) 562-8242
Waltermart, Calamba	(049) 545-7035
Waltermart, Sta. Rosa, Laguna	(049) 549-1243
RIZAL	
Cainta, Sta. Lucia 1	645-0402/04
Cainta, Sta. Lucia 3	681-5301 to 05
TARLAC	
Luisita, Tarlac	(045) 985-1278



With the widest range of DVD units and systems,
let your emotions flow with the powerful sights and sounds of Aiwa.

aiwagold@mail.san.com.ph

Best offers at Abenson

- **Zero-percent interest**
  Visit any Abenson Appliance Quest exhibit and avail of our zero-percent interest exclusive offer

- **On-line Shopping Experience**
  Appliance internet shopping available through myayala.com

- **Appliance Warranty Up to 5 Years**
  Abenson offers its customers a worry-free appliance ownership as it can extend the product warranty to 2, 3 and up to 5 years.

ABENSON AWARD

- **Small Appliance Replacement Deal**
  Avail of outright replacement program for every purchase of small appliances up to two years.

- **Abenson Value Club Membership**
  For a minimum purchase of P10,000 at Abenson, you can enjoy extra special privileges by becoming a member.
  Hurry! Buy and earn more points now.

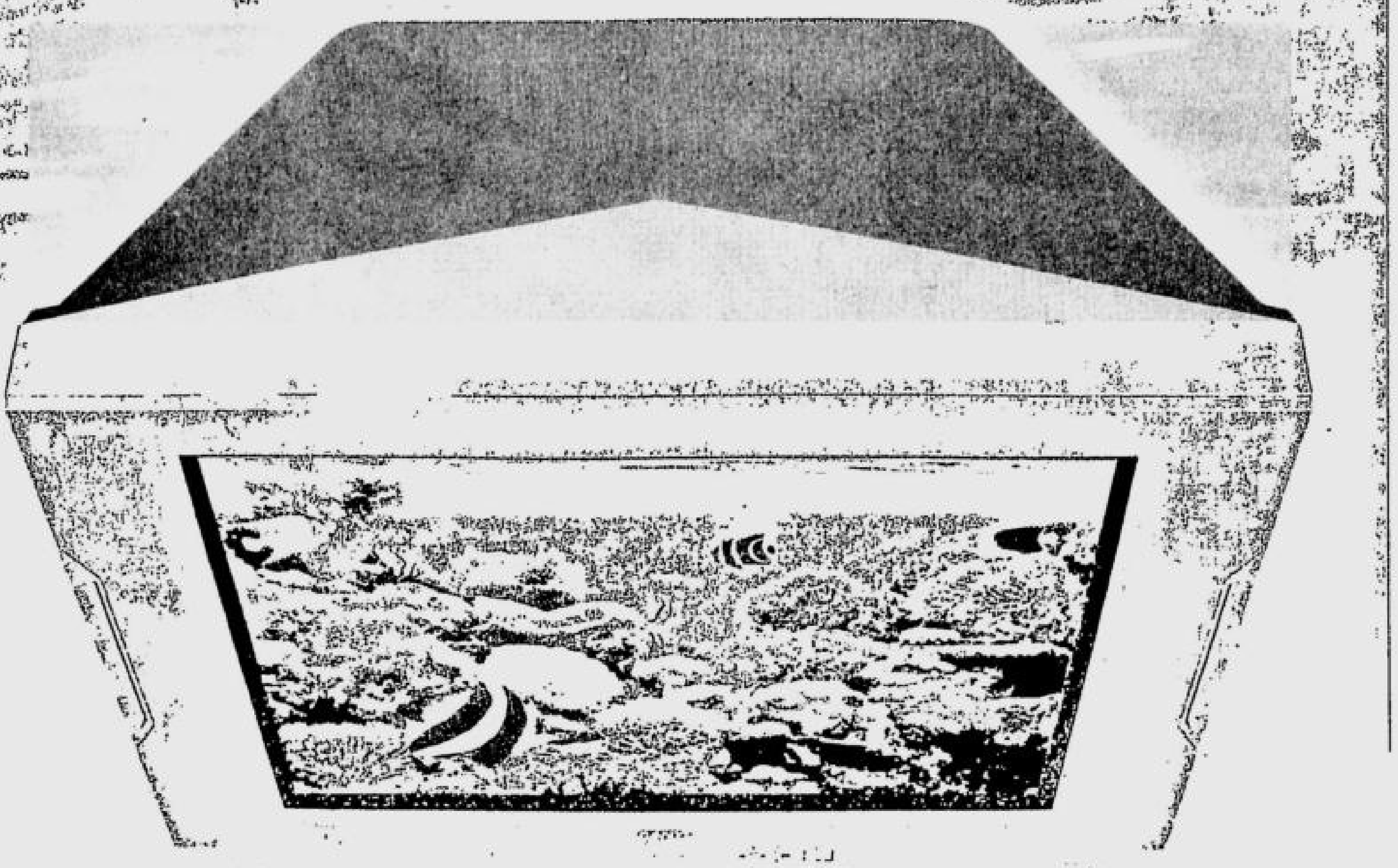
ABENSON
VALUE CARD
2000 ISSUED

- **Earn more points through Rewards Plus**

SANYO

DYNAMIC FLAT VISION TRY Series

ST-21AF1
ST-25AF1
ST-29AF1

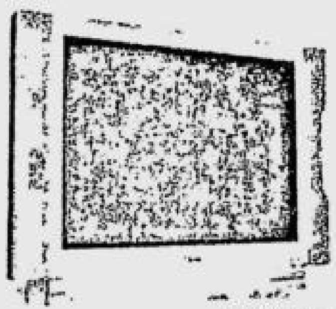


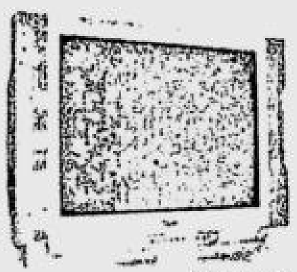
Realistically **FLAT**.

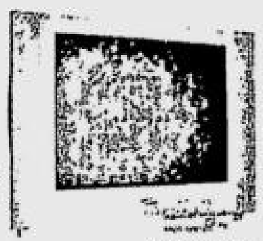
Pure Flat Picture Tube

181 Channel F/S Tuning,
Cable Ready

BBE Sound System for enhanced live presence & Bass Expander circuitry.


ST-29AF1
MTS Stereo


ST-25AF1
MTS Stereo


ST-21AF1
AV Stereo

DYNAMIC FLAT VISION

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SANYO Service Corp.
Sta. Maria Drive, Bo. Tanyag,
Bagumbayan, Taguig, M.Mla.
Tel. No. (632) 839-0802
839-0501~08
Fax No. (632) 839-0510

PASAY CITY BRANCH
2306-G Taft Avenue,
Pasay City, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 551-6330 / 551-1557

QUEZON CITY BRANCH
137-A Roosevelt Ave., SFDM,
Quezon City, Metro Manila
Tel. No. 374-1349 / 414-9647

MARIKINA CITY BRANCH
Door No. 2 Michael Arcade
Bldg., Marcos Highway,
Marikina City

DAGUPAN BRANCH
No. 3 Pinkies Bldg.,
Zamora cor. Gomez St.,
Dagupan City, Pangasinan
Tel. No. (075) 522-0747
Fax No. (075) 522-0254

ILOILO BRANCH
20 De La Rama St.
Iloilo City, Iloilo
Fax No. (033) 337-1313

DAVAO BRANCH
Feliza Yu Bldg. cor. Vinzon St.,
Dakudao Ave., Agdao, Davao City
Telefax No. (082) 300-8541

PAMPANGA BRANCH
E & A Bldg. MacArthur
Highway, Sindalan,
San Fernando, Pampanga
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Fax No. (045) 860-4252

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Extension Cagayan de Oro City
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Fax No. (088) 857-4091

CEBU BRANCH
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Fax No. (032) 346-0471

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& Lopez Jaena Street,
Tacloban City
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Fax No. (053) 321-6212

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RBR Corp. Bldg., Peñaranda
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Pioneer

APPLIANCE QUEST
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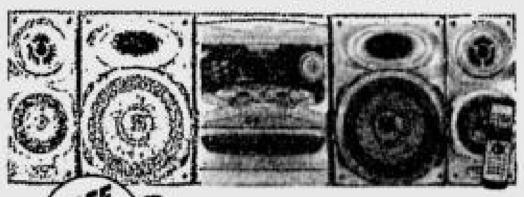
0% INTEREST
in 3, 6 & 12 months
on selected items

AIG American International
BPI Express Credit
Bankard
Equitable Card VISA
Diners Club International
METROBANK UNICARD
CITIBANK
RCBC CARD

FREE VCD MOVIE SOFTWARE
0% INTEREST
Pioneer
Lifestyle
VCD COMPO
NS-3
- 1375W PMPO
- 3 functions: Tuner, AUX, VCD/CD Player w/ motion detecting Powered Doors

CASH PRICE
P21990
CARD PRICE
P3665/mo.
for 6 months

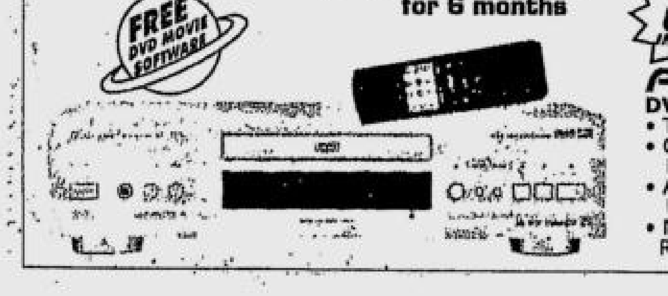

0% INTEREST
Pioneer
MINI COMPO
VS-90SX
- 3500W PMPO
- 3-Disc VCD/CD Player
- 4-Speaker System

FREE KARAOKE & MOVIE VCD SOFTWARE
CASH PRICE
P18490
CARD PRICE
P3082/mo.
for 6 months

0% INTEREST
Pioneer
Lifestyle
MINI COMPO
NS-1
- 1375 W PMPO
- CD Player w/ motion detecting powered doors

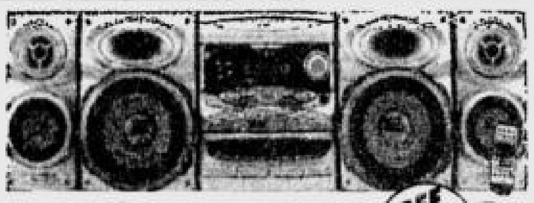
CASH PRICE
P15990
CARD PRICE
P2665/mo.
for 6 months

FREE DVD MOVIE SOFTWARE


0% INTEREST
Pioneer
DV-535K
- Twin Wave Laser Pickup
- Optical and Coaxial Digital Out
- Advanced Graphical User Interface
- New User-Friendly Remote Control Unit

CASH PRICE
P15990
CARD PRICE
P2665/mo.
for 6 months

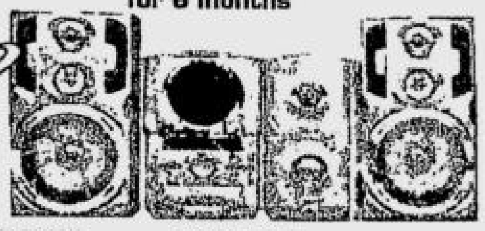
0% INTEREST
Pioneer
MINI COMPO
A780
- 3500W PMPO
- 3-Disc Changer (CD)
- 4-Speaker System


CASH PRICE
P13990
CARD PRICE
P2332/mo.
for 6 months

FREE WOW POLO SHIRT FROM SUNRISE CITY

0% INTEREST
Pioneer
Lifestyle
VCD COMPO
IS-21VCD
- 2000W PMPO
- Futuristic VCD/CD Mini Component

FREE VCD MOVIE SOFTWARE


CASH PRICE
P20990
CARD PRICE
P3499/mo.
for 6 months

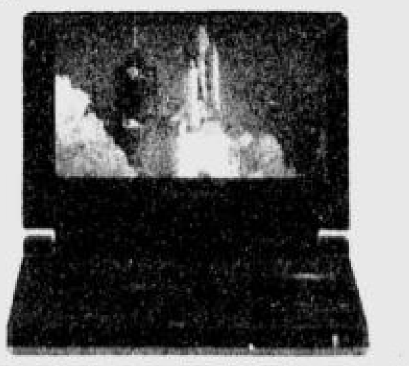
0% INTEREST
FREE DVD MOVIE SOFTWARE

Pioneer
DVD Player
DVL919
- 10-bit video D/A conversion
- Virtual Dolby surround
- Cinema Mode Animation Mode.(DVD/VCD)

CASH PRICE
P23900
CARD PRICE
P1992/mo.
for 12 months

CASH PRICE
P49800
CARD PRICE
P8300/mo.
for 6 months

Pioneer
PDV-LC10
0% INTEREST
- 7-inch wide screen TFT display (336,960 pixels)
- Built-in stereo speakers
- Twin-wave Laser pickup (DVD/SVCD/VCD/CD CDR/CD-RW)



JVC

APPLIANCE QUEST 2001

0% INTEREST

3&6 months

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ROBINSON'S, ERMITA

APRIL 15 TO 30

FREE UX-RACK

UX-V5
MICRO COMPONENT SYSTEM
•360 W PMPO • Vertical CD loading system • Active Hyper-Bass • Motor-driven CD door • Optical digital output • Auto-reverse record play • COMPU-PLAY

CASH PRICE: P10,990

P1,832/ 6 MOS.

FREE UX-RACK

UX-V6
VCD MICRO COMPONENT SYSTEM
•380 W PMPO • Video CD playback with version 2.0 playback control • Vertical CD loading system • Motor-driven CD door • Active Hyper Bass • Optical digital output • COMPU-PLAY

CASH PRICE: P12,990

P2,165/ 6 MOS.

FS-SD9 COMPACT COMPONENT SYSTEM
• Motor-driven sliding CD door
• Active Hyper-Bass • Subwoofer output
• Bass-Reflex design • COMPU-PLAY

CASH PRICE: P14,900

P2,483/ 6 MOS.

FREE TV-RACK

AV-29R8 29" FLAT SCREEN CTV
• Real Flat picture tube w/ dynamic focus • DVD component input • Twin port super bass • Spatializer surround • Eco sensor • Channel guard

CASH PRICE: P42,990

P7,165/ 6 MOS.

FREE TV-RACK

AV-27020 29" BIG SCREEN CTV
• MTS Stereo w/ dBX and SAP • Hyper surround sound • Return + • Channel guard • Game mode • Super command universal remote control

CASH PRICE: P19,990

P6,664/ 3 MOS.

HR-P92K-MULTI SYSTEM HI-FI VHS KARAOKE
• AV-6 head system • B.E.S.T. picture system • Tape running indicator • Super head cleaner • Slow-motion playback • Full-auto functions.

CASH PRICE: P7,990

P1,332/ 6 MOS.

PER DTI-NCR PERMIT NO. 1198 SERIES OF 2000

AIG American International | BPI | Bankard | Equitable
Diners Club International | METROBANK VISA | CITIBANK | RCBC

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HOME APPLIANCES
QUALITY TO LIFE

WRNP 232 (240 liters)

*Also available WRNP 282 (275 liters). Both models are available in Almond and Green.

The Whirlpool Eco-Fresh Refrigerator
Cool under pressure like a Whirlpool woman.

Inner grace. That's what a Whirlpool woman needs to get by in this world. She's able to juggle her time as a career woman and a responsible homemaker as well. And she shines through with a style all her own, with the help of Whirlpool's world-class home partners, like the latest refs from the ***Eco-Fresh Series.*** With dependable features for smart homemaking, such as the ***Humidity Control Crisper*** that regulates temperature and a ***built-in Bio Deodorizer*** that keeps food fresh. Plus ***adjustable shelves*** for ample food storage, with ***clear, see-through bins*** to find food quickly. And because it's ***tropicalized***, a feature that prevents "sweating" and rusting, it stays durably tough for years to come.

The ***Eco-Fresh Series*** and the Whirlpool woman. Cool...even under pressure. Truly, partners in bringing quality to life.

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MAKATI : 3rd Level, Glorietta 4 (inside Automatic Center), Makati City • Tel. Nos. 729-6450 to 52
CEBU : Lot 3 Block 5 Mandaue North Central, Castilex Compound, Cabancalan, Mandaue City, Cebu • Tel. No. (032) 345-3105
WHIRLPOOL PRODUCTS ARE AVAILABLE AT ALL LEADING STORES NATIONWIDE.

Abenson Appliance Quest continues

ABENSON brings back the Appliance Quest invading three various locations. From April 15 to 30, 2001 Abenson will feature the latest summer appliance collection at Robinson's Place Manila, Orosa Atrium, then journeying to Ever Ortigas, Atrium exhibit from April 16 to May 5, 2001 and Robinson's Place Imus from April 20 to May 9, 2001.

Truly exciting perks are at stake, making the appliance exhibits one memorable expedition planned for our valuable customers like you. In store are 0-percent Interest Promo, special interest rates on major credit cards, free premium giveaways, double points promo for Abenson Value Card members, Rewards Plus Points, and free delivery within Manila.

The exhibit will be participated in by Abenson's valued partners like Sony, JVC, Pioneer, LG, Carrier/Condura/Kelvinator, National/Panasonic, Aiwa, Whirlpool, Sanyo, La Germania, Sharp, and Home Plus Furniture. Leading credit card companies are joining this big event.

Appliance Quest is one venue you should check out for you to experience and enjoy the latest thing in audio-video. Only Abenson can bring you this treat and adventure at prices and schemes you can afford, plus the personalized service from our sales force.

Let the expedition begin. Call us for more information at 536-8029 or 536-7914. See you all!

SONY
SONY
SONY

Abenson Supplement team: Jackie Lim and Cecil Soliman